A TEXAS
TITAN
by JOHN M. OSKISON

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A TEXAS TITAN

BOOKS BY

JOHN M. OSKISON

A TEXAS TITAN

BLACK JACK DAVY

WILD HARVEST

A TEXAS TITAN

THE STORY OF SAM HOUSTON

BY JOHN M. OSKISON

1929

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN AND COMPANY, INC.

GARDEN CITY

NEW YORK

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This story, although it follows closely the main current of Sam Houston's career, is presented as a fictionized biography.

Down the stream, down the stream all my days go;
Who can say, who can know where my days go?
From DERRICK LEHMER'S *Indian Songs.*

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SECTION ONE

IN TENNESSEE

Chapter I

YOUNG Sam Houston, in the fringe of a group of listeners before Lynch's Station store, heard the Reverend Macrae declaim:

"The Lord strove mightily for six days, and before resting on the seventh completed the world; and we, my brethren, worthy settlers of Tennessee, have been given by Him the best of it for our own use and enjoyment."

A fierce, muttered comment, "loud-mouthed fool!" from the tall youth's lips roused the red-haired, flat-bosomed girl at his side to protest: "Hush, he might hear you! I don't want you to get into trouble, Sammie!" Her low voice was passionate, serious. At sixteen, Eusabia McCracken believed that her destiny was to live and die in the shadow of this shock-haired boy of seventeen. There was a ruthless directness about him that fascinated, yet frightened her; on her pallet at night, after joining her mother in prayer for President Madison and other rulers, the oppressed of the world, and the McCracken family —Mother and the fatherless Henry and herself—she imagined for Sam wonderful futures: principal of Porter Academy, owner of a great plantation and a hundred slaves, governor, a big man at Washington,

a swift, bright sequence of visions. But she had doubts as well; he was so—"so unbroke!"

"I tell you, he's an old windbag," Sam insisted, turning aside impatiently as the preacher continued his booming address. "Let's get out of this."

"Please, Sammie!" She was hurt by his savage scorn. She followed him, however; and across the road, out of hearing of those who glowed to Macrae's eloquence, she dug slender fingers into his arm and threw hot words at him: "Suppose he is windy, can't you hold your tongue? He's a preacher, and he's got a right to talk grand about God and His chosen." At his angry shrug, her fire paled and a pleading smile lit her thin face. "Sammie, promise me you'll learn to guard your tongue?" He laughed, a hard, nearly soundless chuckle, and she threatened, "If you don't, I'll never let you kiss me again!"

"Wouldn't that be awful!" he mocked. For a minute he stood looking over the top of her head, ignoring her for a picture that seemed to be forming in the flecked April sky. Then, dropping his gaze and taking one of her hands in his big warm fist, he taunted, "Spitfire!"

"I'm not! You think I don't mean what I say?"

"Listen, 'Sabia," he said earnestly, "will you do something for me? I intend to cross the river to-night, and I want you to talk to Ma. If you can get her to promise not to send for me, you can tell where I've gone, but don't tell my brother Bob—and make Ma promise not to tell him."

"I wish I could go, too! Sammie, tell me what you do over there with the Indians?"

They turned away from Lynch's to walk the five miles to the McCracken home, the irregular hedge of Pistol Creek timber on their right a luminous silhouette against the setting sun. Robins and redbirds sang, and a catbird; spring was forward.

"I like to talk to you, 'Sabia." Calm now, he pressed the hand he held affectionately. "You understand me—when you want to. Well, over yonder, I get time to read and talk with the Cherokees—John Ross, Joe Vann, Major Ridge, Con Adair, Ocey Jolly and his pa, Chief Jolly. They're wise, and they're educated, too; some have gone over the mountains east to school, all the way to Princeton College and other places where they teach Latin. I wish I could read Latin."

Eusabia glanced sidewise at the tall boy walking bare-headed at her side, swinging her hand in rhythm with his stride. "You do love books, don't you, Sammie!"

"The Indians're going to hold a council at Oostinaleh in a few days," he said, a gleam of eager anticipation in his gray eyes, "and I'll be there with Chief Jolly."

"Is he your Indian brother?"

"No, he's my Cherokee father; it's his son Ocey that's my Indian brother."

"I wish I had an Indian father!"

"I wish you could see mine, 'Sabia," he smiled.

"He's fat and sensible and good; he likes to sit on a home-made chair tilted back against the logs of his house, specs low down on his nose, while I read out of my English copy of the Iliad. I put the book down and he says, 'Sam, I wish the young folks over yonder in the white settlements knowed the worl' wasn' made jus' las' year!' And there's that blowhard Macrae telling 'em at Lynch's they're God's only favourite children! I reckon the Indians're His children same as us. Men like Macrae make trouble; they don't see straight, don't tell the truth."

Sam fell into a moody silence. Dusk came. At the rise of ground overlooking the decaying stockade, store, mill, and the scattered group of houses making the town of Maryville, they turned west to the McCracken home.

"Won't you come to supper, Sammie?" Eusabia halted where they were screened by a hedge of ground oak, lifting her hands to his shoulders as his arms went around her.

"I'd better not; your ma'd ask me questions. Now, 'Sabia dear, give me a kiss and a promise."

"I'll tell Ma Houston only if she'll promise not to let Bob know?" He nodded. "I promise. Oh, Sammie! Good-bye, Sammie!" Her kiss was quick and ardent; with him she never felt shy or coquettish.

"Dead Red Head," he whispered, sweeping the smooth mop of her hair with his lips; then tauntingly, "Forget me if you dare!"

"Do you think I can't?" she challenged, laughing

and pulling back against the unyielding clasp of his strong arms.

He remembered the strength of her, and the feel of her lithe body against his as in the growing darkness he struck off southwest from Pistol Creek toward the Little Tennessee.

Supperless, he climbed the long slope to the ridge beyond which lay the pleasant valley of Baker Creek, and a smile of content came to relax the tension of his lips. A good thing to smile, rather than to cry! He loved his mother, but he couldn't endure the farm life.

What did he want? He tried to find the answer to that tormenting question as he strode along. Not storekeeping; he grinned as he thought of the experiment that Bob, his eldest brother who considered that he stood in the place of his dead father, had made in taking him to Sheffey's store at Kingston to be a clerk. He had liked it well enough while the Indians were about, coming across the river in canoes with skins and corn and squashes to trade for powder and calico, and he had picked up in a few weeks as much of the Cherokee language as his employer had learned in two years of trading. But he was no good as a salesman. When Mr. Sheffey suggested that he go into the Indian country and drum up trade, he had gone joyously, crossing with Ocey Jolly and going on to Chief Jolly's home on the Hiwassee, where he met many of the "progressives," the educated Indians, as well as

some of the "conservatives," the full-bloods who had no use for white men and their ideas. He had fallen in with the ways of the tribe quickly, hunting with the men, watching the competent women at their grinding, tanning, spinning, and weaving. He had loved their unhurried but always busy life. In the evenings, he had sat with the ruling men in front of their fireplaces, listening to talk of treaties made and broken by the government, of new missions and schools, of delegations sent to Nashville and Washington.

He had hated to go back to Kingston, and when Mr. Sheffey asked him how many pledges of furs and tanned skins he had obtained, could only answer, "Why, I didn't think about the trading, but I'm sure they'll come to us, Sir."

Disgusted, Mr. Sheffey had sent him home.

"You're no good anywhere, s'far's I can see!" Bob had stormed, and set him to work again in the fields, hostile and silent amongst his singing, toiling brothers, Jim, Will, and John. His sisters, Isabella, Mary, and Eliza, had nagged until his mother put a curb on their sharp tongues. The big houseful of tall, energetic children was a handful for the gray-eyed, ample-bodied woman to manage. She had brought them over the mountains from the old home in Virginia after her soldier husband had passed into the Great Beyond to join his beloved General Washington, and settled them on good land here in Blount County. It had been a hard task, but she was equal to it; even Bob quailed before her steady eyes and level, "Easy,

son," in the full storm of his furious rages. When Sam begged her to let him attend Porter Academy, it was she who opposed Bob's determination to break him to the farm. "Every male calf can't be an ox," she said, "and if Sammie wants to go, he shall. It won't do any harm to have some learning in the family."

"Well, that wasn't any good, either!" Sam thought as he forged onward with his long, easy stride. Macrae, the principal, was bigoted and ignorant; when Sam asked to be taught Latin, he had grunted, "What's to be gained by knowing how to read Horace in the original!" Sam had answered innocently, "It's Cæsar, Sir, I want to study—his Commentaries," and Macrae had dismissed him with the comment, "You'll study what the others do, young fellow." Then Sam had found out that no teacher in the school could instruct him in Latin! "Nothing but readin', writin', 'rithmetic, and rhetoric!" Sam had turned his back on the Academy then and there. "Damn schools that diddle at learning!" he had sworn furiously on the long march home. "I'll never go inside one again."

Back once more to growing tobacco, cotton, and corn, to niggering off woodland, hauling timber, to work with his big hands; back to unhappy, restless evenings, sometimes down by the spring branch at the slaves' quarters where "Big Foot" Joe fiddled to the song:

"Stagecoach rattle an' bang,
Stagecoach heave an' sway—
Gwine to go to heaven on de ol' coach road——"

sometimes to Maryville and the tavern which the strait-laced Presbyterians called the doggery, where he drank the biting, rousing "mountain dew" whisky, held his own with the swearing, pungent men who shouldered each other at the bar, and came home cat-footed to creep under the quilts of the hard pallet he shared with Jim and Will, snoring and muttering in their sleep.

One morning Ocey Jolly, in worn moccasins and buckskin jacket, with his black hair long behind and a glitter in his Indian eyes, had stopped to talk with him on his way back from North Carolina where he had visited relatives. The two had tramped through the woods that day, and before Ocey went on Sam had promised to come to his father's place in March. "My father," Ocey said, "will be glad to see you. Over there on the Hiwassee, peach trees will be in bloom, and we will be planting." His words raised an alluring picture of existence on Jolly's Island and back on the mainland: full streams pouring down to the rushing river, the smell of burning brush, men spearing fish, the fragrance of wild lilac, the pink of tender willow and maple buds, the heart-stirring whistle of redbirds, and the new grass in the "old fields," those unexpected clearings in the forest that were supposed to be abandoned corn patches of some prehistoric race of farmers.

"If it wasn't for 'Sabia, I never would go back," Sam told himself. She was fire and pepper and maple-

sugar sweetness, a girl who would give everything, ask everything. He gibed her, mocked her, confided in her, called her his guiding star, kissed her—boy's kisses—quarrelled with her, loved her through everything. She would know how to get around his mother; move about the house gossiping and helping with the work, find the right moment to extract the required promise, then break the news of his flight.

"Ma won't grieve long. She knows I can't get along with Bob and can't ever be a farmer."

He was going downhill now, and lengthened his stride. It was after midnight by the Great Dipper when he passed Brick Mill, rousing David Craig's dogs. Someone opened the leather-hinged door and called out, but Sam made no pause. Before dawn, he reached the river, and sat down, his back against a log, glad of the rest before he could summon Cosey Tiger with his canoe from the opposite bank.

The miles had tired his body, but cleared his brain and subdued the confused emotions that tore at him. He had carried back from his first excursion to the Hiwassee an Indian name, given him by Chief Jolly —Ka-la-nu, the raven, the bird that, legend said, had been sent at the time of creation to fetch fire the thunder god placed for man at the bottom of a hollow sycamore tree. The bird had tried, tried until it was scorched black, but had failed. Was he to try and fail? And what was he to try?

A mist hung over the water, impenetrable even by country eyes; and before those inner eyes of which he was dimly conscious hung an equally obscuring veil. Only a little way could he look into the future. He could only say to himself that he was now going to a people he loved, to sit silent while slow council speeches were made, to squat in John Jolly's family circle as a son.

Why did the Chief care for him? Did he hope that Sam would become a link between his people and the Americans who, in Macrae's opinion, had been chosen by God to inherit the earth? If he *could* bring white and red into understanding contact! But—Jolly had named him Ka-la-nu.

He sighed, remembering certain cryptic exchanges he had overheard where the word gold was whispered, and already hard-eyed men from lower Georgia had pushed up into the Cherokee hills, disregarding Cherokee rights, insolently reliant on state protection. They had not yet found gold, but they would; Sam was sure the Indians knew where it was; and when they did, out the tribe would have to go!

Would he go with them, be brushed aside, exiled? He could not stop the Anglo-Saxon flow, however passionately he tried. Loving his Indian friends, his boy's heart was heavy.

With sunup, the river mist vanished. Smoke came from Cosey Tiger's stick-and-mud chimney. Sam rose and shouted, and the Indian came out, staring into

the sun for a moment, waved, and went down to his canoe.

Sitting on the low half-log bench beside Tiger, Sam breakfasted on johnnycake, venison, and water dipped from a spring in a clean-scraped cymling gourd. He traded laconic comments with the Indian, watched his young and silent wife at the fireplace cooking, moving deftly, bringing food to them while Cosey flung at her an affectionate epithet, "Un-li-ta," chatterbox. Sam laughed without sound, opened wide his eyes.

"You go to Oostinaleh with the Chief?" Cosey asked, and, when Sam nodded, "I better let you take a pony to ride."

"I'd buy one from you, but——"

"All right, you pay me some day. Tell John Jolly I don' feel good enough to come to that council; I see him later."

Rested, refreshed, cheerful, Sam rode away through the Indian country, keeping the Unaka Range of the Great Smoky Mountains on his left. He was conscious of a sense of leisure, of pressure released. The sweet, warm spring seemed to envelop him, a woodpecker's fast hammer strokes reminded him of creeping, giggling, half-naked boys armed with toy bows and arrows peering up tall dead tree trunks —Indian children who, after recovering from their shyness, loved to climb over long Sam and tease him by dropping wet leaves between his shirt collar and skin.

At the council, he found John Jolly's family established in the Chief's shelter, an unchinked log cabin near the great spring of Oostinaleh that fed an ever living stream. North and south for half a mile, the camps of the Cherokees extended, indicated by wisps of smoke, the barking of dogs, the sound of axes cutting firewood. Sunset was near; slanting streamers of light pierced the cleared spaces under the umbrella-like oaks and tall maples. At Jolly's fire, outside the cabin, his wife squatted in front of the cooking pot, and his daughter Jennie was coming out of the cabin with a buckskin bag of corn meal. They saw Sam's pony fox-trotting up the slope, recognized his uncovered thatch of brown hair. Jennie called to her father.

Chief Jolly came out, smiling broadly, grasped Sam's hand as he swung down. "I am glad to see you, my son." He took the rope reins of the bridle. "Come, we will find some grass for this pony." Sam nodded, and they walked up the hill together, stopping at the spring to allow the beast to bury its muzzle in the hollow-log watering trough. "You have come a long way," said Jolly, "an' you mus' stay with us a long time!"

"I'd like that, but I don't know——" Sam broke off to ask, "Where's Ocey?"

"He stay back home this time, he mus' tend the corn."

They found a grass-grown clearing; Sam adjusted the rawhide hobbles to the pony's front legs, stood up; Jolly had his pocketknife out and was slowly

whittling a thick twig, a sign that he was thinking; Sam's own knife came out, and presently they were squatting and talking.

"Do you come," the Chief asked, "with good words from your mother?"

"No; she don't like me to ride on the Indian road; but I came anyway, because I want to live with you." Sam met the Indian's quick, inquiring glance and spoke impulsively: "I hate the white man's road. It is crooked, full of lies and quarrelling and bragging. In my home, I fight with my brothers, and my sisters nag; it is like the life of a bob-tailed horse in fly time!"

Jolly answered, smiling: "With us, also, is not always peace; even on serious things some of our best men do not agree. Men like Major Ridge tell us we mus' go west an' give up this country to white people; others like John Ross tell us to stay an' get lawyers at Washington to speak for us so we won't be sent off. This council, too—I call the people together to see if we wan' to keep that ol' law of blood revenge. Nobody think jus' like somebody else. We listen to ever'body an' do the best we can. To-morrow comes a man from Washington to tell us why we mus' go away from our home here in Georgia an' Tennessee. Well——" he broke off abruptly, rose, "anyway, Sam, we are glad you remember us an' wan' to be with us. We go now an' get something to eat."

In the night rain blew in between the unchinked logs and woke Sam; he heard a low murmur of talk where Jolly and his wife lay, then the Chief stole

softly across and hung canvas against the logs, whispering, "Now it's all right." Sam muttered, "Thank you, my father."

The morning broke sparkling, the woods clean-washed and echoing the bustle of the great camp. There had been a call to prayer by the missionary, Blackburn, and Sam went with the Jollys to a place near the stand, squatting with them and drawing his blanket about his waist as they did theirs. Major Ridge came to shake hands and sit beside the Chief. The missionary, bearded and angular, dropped the blanket from his shoulder as he mounted the platform, kept his place in the Bible he carried with a huge, work-roughened finger, and prayed simply.

Blackburn knew the Indians, appealed to their sane materialism, made no emotional display. How different from Macrae and other preachers Sam had listened to at meetings where men and women had fallen in epileptic fits frothing at the mouth, screaming, "Praise the Lord!" Sam had seen them laid out in rows by sweat-drenched helpers of panting exhorters, rigid, helpless, and glassy-eyed, to be resurrected after the excitement died; and within a week many of them were back to their brawling and drinking, to be haled before church tribunals for blasphemies and fornications!

After breakfast, the Indians gathered for the council. Jolly walked to the platform with the Washington agent and said, "Before we talk about our own business, we will hear this white man, Mr. Williams."

Listening to Williams's insincere and flowery speech, Sam muttered angrily, "Liar, hypocrite!" The white man called the Cherokees untutored children of the forest who, trained for the chase, would be unhappy if they remained in Georgia encompassed by American civilization. "You need to fly far, follow the deer and the antelope and buffalo westward!" And so on, with strenuous, sweeping gestures. He was in a lather when at last he stopped, mopped his face, and, nodding at Jolly, sat down.

"We are glad," the Chief said in English, "to know now what they think is good for us at Washington." Sam caught the rasp of irony in the words, though the beaming politician did not. Sam joined Jolly, Major Ridge, Ross, and Vann in the group around Williams. Young Ross, already budding into a power in the tribe that would increase for forty years, spoke earnestly to the white man: "Don't you understand, Sir, that the Cherokees are rapidly changing their way of living, adapting themselves to your civilization? We have some schools already where English is taught, and soon we shall have many more. We have brick houses, many substantial frame and log houses. We are good farmers. We have gristmills, sawmills, even a cotton gin."

"Yes, but——" Parrot-like, Williams repeated the worn phrases of his speech, and Sam thought, "Ross is wasting his breath!"

It was now time to call the council, and Williams, explaining that he did not understand Cherokee, said

he would rest by John Jolly's fire. He went to watch Mrs. Jolly stirring the hominy pot and ogle seventeen-year-old Jennie, sewing in the doorway of the log shelter.

Again speaking to the tribesmen from the platform, the Chief said: "It is time to hear what you have to say about this new law for the abolition of blood revenge; those who want us to walk in its light have framed it thus," and he read slowly from a sheet of tough foolscap: "If in the future any life is taken without malice intended, the innocent taker thereof shall not be accounted guilty. Only if a brother, forgetting his natural affections, should raise his hand in anger and kill his brother, he shall be judged guilty of murder and be punished accordingly."

Jolly paused, removed his spectacles and stroked his thick hair. "First, the men of the Wolf Clan will talk," he said, stepping back to sit beside young Ross who, having framed the proposed law, was acting as secretary of the council.

Tall Doublehead spoke, then the head of the Deer Clan, followed by the chiefs of the Bird and Paint Clans, and of the Clans called Sa-ha-ni, Ga-ta-gi-wi, and Gi-la-hi—the Blue People, the Blind Swamp People, the Long-haired People. Deliberate, earnest talks they were, the speakers casting back into the misty past, to the time when in council their headmen smoked the great peace pipe that was pierced with seven stem holes, one for each of the Clan chiefs,

and when in the central town house sat always a tender of the fire that must never go out.

In summary, Major Ridge spoke last as the sun touched the tree tops at the people's backs: "Thus said the men of the Wolf Clan," and so on. Sam rose to go; it seemed certain that the new law would be approved, and he wanted to read in his translation of the Iliad, which he carried thrust into a deep pocket, for somehow these simple folks stimulated a hunger for that mighty tale, as a day-long tramp roused an appetite for meat. Nearing Jolly's cabin, he heard the voice of Williams:

"You must give me a kiss—kiss, kiss—you *do* understand English!"

Jennie Jolly's words, in Cherokee, came to Sam's ears half muffled, from lips trembling with fright: "No! You must go away from me; I do not like you to touch me."

"God, girl," Williams spoke thickly, "you're a sweet savage morsel!" his tone roughened, "I *will* kiss you!"

Sam heard a smothered appeal, "Mother!"

"Be quiet!" There was a sound of scuffling, and Sam plunged through the doorway. Jennie saw him, cried, "My brother!" and stumbled as the boy's big hand jerked Williams backward. He dragged the man out of the door, his heels thumping on the sill, hauled him upright, faced him round, shook him violently and sent him sprawling.

"I ought to shake the life out of you and throw

you to the hogs! Get your horse and ride!" He rushed inside to drag out the white man's saddle, saddlebags, his holstered pistol and the coat he had removed before attacking Jennie. Williams was still reeling from the effects of Sam's handling when he stooped for his pistol, cocked it, and made a step toward the boy.

"You cursed renegade pup!" A stick, hurled by Jennie, struck the man's arm, and the bullet flew wide. Sam lunged to wrench the weapon from Williams and fling it into the stream that flowed beside the camp.

"Get!" he ordered, and through the encampment he half dragged the cursing Williams past staring women and frightened children to the grazing ground. Whimpering with rage, his victim sputtered: "You fool! The girl's only a squaw, with no more virtue to lose than a bitch dog." Sam knocked him down for that, planted the copper toe of a heavy boot in his ribs, called hoarsely, "Get up, you polecat, so I can knock you down again!" But Williams lay still, a purple patch spreading around a closed eye. Sam caught and saddled his horse, led it to where he lay, lifted him and threw him astride. "Make tracks!" he commanded.

Riding away, Williams flung a parting threat, "You shall suffer for this, you damned unfledged bully!"

With a soundless laugh and a widening of his mocking eyes, Sam watched him go. Jennie touched

his arm softly, adoringly as she passed him on the way to find her mother.

By the time, months later, Williams's complaint against Sam, "renegade white youth from a respectable family of Maryville, Tennessee," reached the Cherokee agent at Tellico, Return Jonathan Meigs, it had accumulated a veritable kite tail of indorsements. Meigs, wise, bearded, New England bred, read the document with considerable astonishment, shaking his head as he reached the final tag, "The action recommended in the body of this complaint you will take at once, and report to the undersigned."

Muttering, "This precious piece of paper will be the better for further ripening," he buried it at the bottom of a deep drawer and sent for Sam, still with the Chief on Jolly's Island.

"What's the truth about this, my boy?" he demanded.

Sam flushed. "I'd rather not speak of it, Sir."

"You'll have to, Sam; Williams has set the government after you."

Meigs listened in grim silence to Sam's story, told wrathfully, his gray eyes blazing at the memory. "He was trying to pull her dress off when I came up," he stammered, his breath broken. The old man rose and laid a hand on Sam's shoulder.

"I'm a man of peace and full of years, Sam," he said, "but I should have been glad to see you thrash that scoundrel!" He stood thinking a moment then,

smiling, "Sam, the ways of man are marvellous; tomorrow I'll have to arrest you and send you off for trial—unless you happen not to be in reach!"

"Leave the Indians?" the young man looked his dismay.

"Yes, cross over into Roane County."

"But I like living with them, Sir, and I hope some day to do something for them."

"I hope you will, my boy. Suppose you stay with me overnight and we'll talk it out," and sitting together in the warm July dusk the old man reasoned: "After all, you must make your career amongst your own people. It's fine to be a Don Quixote when you're young and romantic. I can well understand your love for these Cherokee friends, but—there's always a but—you could do so little living with them. You must seek amongst the whites, your own people, the power to help. If you should go to Congress, or become Secretary of War, for example, you could give them real help. Do you see?"

So while Mr. Meigs forwarded the Williams complaint, with his crabbed indorsement, "Said Sam Houston has removed from this agency's jurisdiction," Sam went home to his family. Nothing was changed; Bob strove as energetically as before to fit him into the clicking machinery of production on the farm; his brothers John and Will slyly enticed him into fervent talk about Indians, then caricatured for their sisters' amusement his enthusiastic descriptions. One evening, Isabella let down her dark hair, rouged

her cheeks with red clay, dressed herself in deerskin and blanket, and knocked at the door as the others sat at supper. Hesitating in the doorway, she signed to John, who cried out, "Sam, here's your Indian sweetheart!" Sam rose, started for the door, to be met with the syrupy jargon no Indian ever used; Isabella flung herself in his arms, declaiming, "Come away with me, brave white lover, to my forest home!" From the tableful rose shouts of laughter. Sam froze, flushed, pushed Isabella aside and ran out of the door. Mrs. Houston's smile lingered until he was out of hearing, then she rebuked them, "You've hurt him, teasing him that way!"

"Hurt his dignity, poor boy," Bob gibed; then under his breath, "He has too much of that useless stuff in his make-up and too little of anything that's worth shucks."

Sam's flaming temper and injured vanity carried him only a little way, however; he stopped and laughed, "I don't wonder they nag at me when I'm so easy to plague!" He resolved that from that time on he would rule his spirit. "I'm a fool to get my dander up. Let 'em play tricks if they want to, I'm not going to let 'em hurt me. I reckon I do seem queer to them, liking the Indians as I do, and not wanting to do what they like. But I'm going my own road; Bob and no one else'll stop me!"

He turned back, entered the door with a grin, and took his place at the table.

Chapter II

FROM that evening Sam seemed suddenly to mature. He no longer heeded the ragging of his brothers and sisters, firmly but quietly resisted Bob's attempts to direct and control him, and turned finally away from the work of the farm. He decided to teach school, and to his mother's objection that he hadn't enough learning retorted:

"I know more now than Macrae ever did. I didn't waste my time with the Indians, Ma; I read the books that Chief Jolly and the others brought home from college and some that Mr. Meigs lent me."

He won her over, and began to prepare. Behind his intentions ran a steadfast purpose to aid his Indian friends. Mr. Meigs was right, he must work amongst his own people. The decision made, he flung himself "whole hog" into the neighbourhood activities, attended house raisings and field clearings, doing his share alongside the other men. With his brothers, he went to the merrymakings, wrestling, jumping, foot-racing, shooting at marks, fighting bare-knuckle fights in the light of leaping flames from heaped-brush fires lighted by boys with torches as darkness fell. He drank the sugared rum and moun-

tain dew dispensed at political meetings, listened to the perfervid oratory of the speakers and studied their magnificent gestures. Rabble-rousers, their critics called these high-sounding orators, but Sam was clever enough to understand that their flowery talk pleased the crowd, and that a man's power of arousing the emotions rather than appealing to reason counted most in catching votes.

To dances within riding distance he took Eusabia, on a pad behind his saddle, to dance half the night with her, or to rouse her quick jealousy by flirting with other girls. He talked to her, as to no one else, of his ideas and his ambitions. One evening, sitting close beside her on the porch of her mother's house after the two had heard a candidate hold a crowd spellbound with sonorous periods and glowing praise of the voters, "the finest product of the world's most splendid civilization!" he remarked:

"The folks that swallow such taffy ain't fools, 'Sabia. They've got plenty of good horse sense, but they like to be flattered by highfalutin' language they don't understand, that sounds good and makes 'em feel they've got as much learning as anybody. They'll listen to sense, but first you've got to get 'em interested in you, in the way you talk; you've got to make 'em shout for *you*."

He turned musing eyes upon her as she sat silent looking up at his face. "Do you know, 'Sabia," he asked solemnly, rhetorically, "how a man keeps his hogs from running wild?"

She made no reply, only crowding closer to his solid bulk, and he went on: "There's plenty of feed for the hogs in the woods, acorns and such, that tastes better than corn and swill, but in the woods *they can't get salt.* So the farmers put out handfuls of salt with the corn, see?"

"Of course; everybody knows that."

"You think so, 'Sabia, but everybody hasn't got the good sense you have!"

She laughed softly. "Is that your salt of flattery, Sammie?"

"No. Nor this, either!" He stooped, kissed the top of her head. "I love your red hair, and the way you leave it loose, not hid under one of those knitted caps most girls wear to save slicking up every day and hide the dirt."

Again she laughed; what things he would say!

" 'Sabia, I haven't told you why I'm going to teach school. It's so that I can go on learning, too. Some day I'm going to talk men into doing what I want 'em to do, toll 'em my way." He chuckled. "There's a lot I want to see done!"

She nodded. Indistinctly, yet surely, she felt a greatness in this tall ungainly boy, now almost a man; sometimes it frightened, sometimes it stirred her. Where would he go? and would he take her with him? But, after all, it didn't matter about her, so long as he went far and straight on his destined way. "Sammie, you know I believe in you, and I always will," she whispered. "All you need is discipline for

that wild temper of yours; you'll have to govern yourself before you can govern other men."

"Wise 'Sabia!" He drew her close with a strong arm around her shoulders. "You're right; and teaching school is going to be good discipline. You know that. Kiss me, Red Head; I'd be mighty lonely and discouraged if it wasn't for you."

She kissed him, with an aching tug at her heart; but what it was that made her sad she could not have said.

During the late summer, young Houston rode through the settlements of Blount County, his saddlebags heavy with books to display to the impressed parents of boys and girls he meant to teach. He asked as a fee for each pupil eight dollars a term, a sensational advance from the usual six, but he agreed to take two-thirds of the sum in cotton cloth or corn. He used his longest words in discussions with farmers and their wives, even a Latin tag or two that he had acquired. As a result, when his school opened he had more pupils than he had room for. He taught well, kept his own restive spirit in check, held the interest of the rather wild, unruly children, commanded their respect. His spring closing exercises brought visitors from a dozen stations, and his mother's welcome comment: "You've done well, Son! Everyone is surprised and pleased at the way you've turned out. I'm so glad, and your father would have been proud of you!"

Sam had but indistinct memories of his soldier father, who after the Revolutionary War had remained in the army as brigade inspector, returning home only for brief visits to the neglected fields and outbuildings of the Virginia farm. A tall, heavy, grizzled and dour figure, he would scold the slaves, growl at the state of the fields, and depart with alacrity when his leave was up. Sam recalled once, before he was eleven, racing in from work on hearing of a neighbourhood spelling bee and finding his father on the porch smoking his pipe.

"What's your hurry, Sammie?" the old man had asked.

"There's a spelling bee, Pa, and——"

"Going to be a lawyer, Son?" his father had laughed, shaking his shaggy head. "I reckon if you can learn to spell big words and sling 'em around it'll make folks think you've got brains!"

As soon as he could, Sam went off once more to Chief Jolly on the Hiwassee. The country was seething with excitement over rumours of war with England, Sam had heard that British agents were at work stirring up the Indians against the Americans, and he wanted to find out how his friends the Cherokees stood.

Jolly and other leaders of the tribe were reassuring. But Sam learned that their neighbours and hereditary foes, the Creek Indians of upper Alabama, under the fanatic half-breed Weatherford, were

committed to the British and were threatening the western Cherokee towns. War drums were beating in the hills, and their savage cadence stirred Sam.

He returned to Maryville restless and eager, dropping all thought of school-teaching while war loomed. All through the year of 1812 he shuttled back and forth between his home and the Indians, talked in councils, discussed the crisis with his friends. It became clear that volunteers from Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama would have to put down the Creek rebellion and assist the Cherokees; and early in 1813 the first contingent under General Andrew Jackson marched southward against Weatherford.

On a warm spring day a recruiting detail entered Maryville to the stirring urge of fife and drum; the lieutenant in charge flung a handful of silver dollars on the head of an old drum that was set down under guard in the road; another drum was beaten lustily, fifes squealed the air of "Buffalo Girls," and a smartly uniformed sergeant paced up and down shouting, "Who'll join Uncle Sam's boys an' help lick the British redcoats?"

Sam enlisted, took his dollar from the drum-head, and signed the roll. Before reporting for drill, he rode home. Bob stormed, "You're a fool to go into the ranks; you're supposed to be educated, and ought to get an appointment as ensign!"

"I know nothing of soldiering," Sam answered. "I'm scarcely twenty; and I'd rather honour the ranks than risk disgracing myself as an unfledged

officer. When I'm fit for an appointment I expect to get it!"

His mother ran to him, kissed him, and cried, "I'm proud of you, Son." Isabella, Mary, and Eliza sewed and knitted for him in a kind of holy zeal.

He hated the drill and military discipline, but having put on the yoke he uttered no protest; rather he threw himself, big agile body and keen brain, into the camp routine with cheerful energy. He quickly mastered drill tactics, became a leader in leisure-hour games, drank and sang and told tall tales of his Indian life. He told his captain what he had learned of the Cherokees' intention of remaining friendly. "You might go so far as to report to the proper officer, Sir, for General Jackson's information, that it's possible to secure the help of the Cherokees. They'll join with the friendly Creeks of Alabama in this war on Weatherford and the hostile Creeks that have threatened their western towns.

Before the company was marched away, Sam was made a sergeant. "And," said his captain, "General Jackson sent his thanks for the information; it confirms his own understanding."

The first feather in his military cap! A moment's attention from Major General Jackson, fire-eating Andy, who had undertaken the task of putting down the Indian allies of the British. Sam wore his chevrons with pride, kept himself and his platoon of husky, swearing, hard-drinking farm lads and woodsmen spruce, alert, and cheerful. In July, he was promoted

to ensign and ordered to Knoxville to assist in the organization and drilling of the East Tennessee battalion. Before setting out, he was summoned to General Jackson's tent; the commander had paused at the camp to inspect the new troops.

The thin, sorrel-topped, restlessly energetic little general glanced up at the new ensign's salute, ran his eyes swiftly down the strong, smartly uniformed body. "I've heard of you, young man. I was glad to get your information about the Cherokees. I've just been told of your promotion, and I wanted to see for myself whether or not your regimental commander could distinguish a soldier from a stable boy! That's all."

"Yes, Sir." Sam saluted and turned away, striding back to his tent with a feeling of exaltation. He was won to the General as he had been to Chief Jolly, instantly and irretrievably. Unlike as two men could be, both seemed utterly genuine, wise, able.

The soldier's life! Jackson's approval had committed Sam. Riding out of Knoxville on long trips to stations on the Holston, the French Broad, and Nolichucky rivers, pushing east to the Watauga settlements to stimulate enlistments in daylight rallies and pledge the drink-valiant at tavern bars in the evening, he was content.

With the dropping of the leaves, his battalion was marched to the big Ten Islands training camp to be outfitted and welded by hard drilling into the coherent fighting force Jackson demanded. Here,

from October to the new year, they waited, impatient, fretting. News came at intervals, telling of Jackson's pursuit of the hostile Creeks, of how he had chased them out of Turkeytown, and had beaten them at Tallahassee-hatchee, not a single Creek escaping alive! Then came reports of fierce fighting at Talladega town; slightly wounded men making their way back to their homes told of the grim hand-to-hand conflict, whispered that at one moment the militia had been on the point of breaking and that Jackson himself had rallied them, rushing amongst them cursing and striking with the flat of his sword. "He's a devil; nothing can stop him!" they said enthusiastically. "He's an army in himself."

When, later, Sam heard that Jackson had met peace envoys from the Creeks at Hillabee town and sent them back to their chief with promise of immunity from punishment if they would lay down their arms, only to see them slaughtered or taken prisoner by General White, marching to rejoin Jackson after the relief of Turkeytown, he raged. "That's a hell of a way to make war!" he cried out furiously to his fellow officers. "That ends all peace talk from the Creeks." He was glad to know that Jackson had nothing to do with this betrayal; it appeared that White had refused to listen to the messengers bringing word of the peace agreement, and had yielded to the blood lust of his men.

Most of Sam's comrades in arms were amused at his anger, for in their eyes the only good Indian was

a dead one, and any way of killing him the right way. They said their only worry was lest they should have no chance to kill a few Creeks themselves.

News of other victories over the hostiles arrived; Christmas passed while they chafed against inaction, bored by the routine of the camp; then the colour of the reports changed.

The men under Jackson, half fed, with their boots wearing out and their uniforms growing ragged, began to long for home; ammunition was so scarce that hunting was forbidden; as enlistments expired, men turned away north in growing numbers; there were mutinies and desertions. Jackson's small army was reduced to a handful. Besides his Cherokee allies, the General found himself with hardly a hundred men fit for duty.

Then came the call for the East Tennessee battalion to join Jackson on the Tallapoosa River. Eager, confident, delighted to be at length summoned to share the fighting, they marched out. Sam went with a high heart, glad to help his Cherokee friends, alight with the ambition to signalize himself. They found Jackson miles from Tallapoosa town, where he was encamped to feel out the Indians' strength, for his force was too slender to fling recklessly against the Creek stronghold.

Hardly had the newcomers pitched their tents when the Creeks swarmed over the little river in a surprise attack. In a moment, Sam found himself and his company facing the shock of a horde of yelling

painted savages armed with rifles and bows and arrows, too. At the head of his men, he commanded them to fire, then kneel to meet the charging Indians with the bayonet. But the line wavered; his untried soldiers began to give way. Frantic, raging, he prodded the falterers forward with his sword. At this critical instant, a band of Cherokee allies, their white headdresses bobbing as they ran, closed in behind the Creeks with wild yells. The Creeks broke, scattered into the near-by woods, where they could re-form.

Jackson halted the pursuit. "They're too many for us; they've cut us to hell!" he said as he rode amongst the distracted men. Sam, panting, dishevelled, his hair tossed, and his eyes still blazing though he was growing cold in the blustery January rain that was falling, cursed his company of bully boys: "Damn you, you've got a taste of Indian fighting; I hope you like it! You'll get a bellyful before the campaign's over."

Jackson's problem was to save his force until it could be reorganized and reënforced, and he ordered a retreat. Back over the hills again they went, Sam's company, with the army's single six-pounder cannon to bludgeon the harrying pursuers, fighting desperate rear-guard actions.

Weatherford sent word throughout the hostile Creek towns: "We've whipped Jackson and run him back to the Coosa River!" It was true. Three days

later, other Creek warriors routed a Georgia army. The news came to the dispirited and exhausted men of Sam's company. "We're asked to fight fiends out of hell," complained the second lieutenant, "and without asbestos uniforms and rations of brimstone I'm damned if we can lick 'em!"

"With discipline, we can," Sam insisted. "Discipline will win in the end!"

His terse speech was repeated to Jackson, who sent for Sam, looked at him with a twinkle of his hard blue eyes. "Lieutenant Houston, I'm publishing your words in a general order to this command. If every man that offers his coattail as a target were shot down by his company officers, we'd soon have a force of fighting men!"

From Tennessee came a first detachment of reenforcing volunteers, a few of whom had reënlisted, but most were raw material. They were set to drilling, to learning the hard discipline of the camp. The first deserter was caught and hanged before the eyes of all. News of the execution roused the politicians of Tennessee to denounce Jackson; "Bloody Andy!" they dubbed him, but desertions ceased. A second and third draft of reënforcements came, and there were nine hundred men fit for service besides the Cherokee allies.

In March Jackson moved south along the Coosa River. He erected a log stronghold, where he left his stores under guard, before setting off on the fifty-

mile march against the Creek position at To-ho-pe-ka, Horseshoe Bend, on the Tallapoosa River. Back almost to the very scene of that January rout!

His spies, then his advance guard, gained contact, sent back to Jackson news that nearly a thousand warriors, their women and children at their back, in the town set in the loop of the deep, swift river, awaited him. They had closed the open end of a hundred-acre horseshoe with stout six-foot-high log breastworks, skilfully traversed and loopholed for cross firing.

After a daybreak breakfast, Jackson sent mounted troops, scouts, and his Cherokees down to cross the river, make their way back and form on the bank opposite and nearly surrounding the horseshoe, so that none of the Creeks should escape across the river. His remaining force he advanced within sight of the log breastworks, and planted his cannon within eighty yards.

At ten o'clock, signals across the river told Jackson that his cavalry and Indian allies were in position. The cannon opened on the breastworks, while his riflemen's fire kept the defenders' heads down. Two hours of futile battering by the cannon and ineffective sniping followed. Meanwhile, the Cherokees across the river swam over and brought away the Creeks' flotilla of canoes that had been insecurely hidden under the overhanging branches of newly leaved trees. With the canoes, they crossed into the horseshoes, set fire to the town, and ad-

vanced upon the barricaded hostiles from the rear. They were beaten back, however, fighting fiercely.

Noon passed. Jackson called his regimental commanders. "We must storm their works!" Bugles sounded the charge, and within a minute the bayonets of the Tennesseeans were thrusting through the portholes, and Indian bullets were flattening on their steel. Like furious dogs straining and yelping at one another from each side of the barrier, the Creeks and Jackson's men fought, too close for effective rifle fire, the logs too firmly placed to be battered down.

"Up and over!" Sam shouted to his men, jumping at the breastworks. He clambered up, stood on top for a moment, his sword flourishing dramatically as his cry went down the line, then leaped down amongst the enemy. A stream of yelling soldiers followed.

Sam felt a stunning blow in his thigh, looked down to see the shaft of an arrow vibrating at his side, its iron barb sunk deep in his flesh. He tried vainly to draw it out, then caught the arm of his second lieutenant and begged, "Pull it out for me!" The officer tugged, looked up with blanched lips to say, "I can't, it's in too deep!"

"Damn you, pull it out!" Sam cried, furious. "If you don't, I'll run you through," and he raised his sword. With a desperate two-handed effort, the other tore the arrow free, lacerating the flesh of Sam's thigh horribly and setting the blood to spouting.

"Get back to the surgeon!" Sam's captain, catching sight of him, ordered. Streaming with blood, Sam

clambered heavily over the logs and made his way to a dressing station.

As he lay bandaged, the bleeding staunched, Jackson came up to ask the surgeon: "Who've you got here, Bates? . . . Houston? Lieutenant, you've done well!"

"Sir, I'm ready to go back." Sam rose, limped a few steps.

"Stay where you are; you're not fit to fight." Jackson finished his tour of the wounded and galloped away.

Sam remained on his feet; he found that he could hobble about without too much pain or loss of blood. Hardly two hundred yards away, the close-locked struggle went on to a thrilling roar of sound, curses, yells, shots, screams of the horribly wounded, scuffling and the scraping of heavy hob-nailed boots. He responded to that uproar like primitive man, longed to be in the thick of it.

Hell's fire!" He grabbed up his sword, hippety-hopped forward. He was running by the time he reached the log barrier. He got over, felt to make sure the bandages were still holding. Men of his company had found a "rat's nest"—a steep-banked little ravine over which the Indians had piled logs and where a handful had established themselves behind loopholes. The second lieutenant had his men on their bellies, sniping, while Creek bullets from the cave-like shelter were taking heavy toll. Sam ran among the prone riflemen, shouting, "Come on and prod 'em

out with steel!" Men rose, followed him, sweat-stained and dirt-spattered, some weeping in a mad hysteria of rage and excitement. Sam stooped to tear away a log of the overhead cover; the motion certainly saved him from being shot through the head. Instead, two bullets tore through the flesh and muscle of his right arm at the shoulder. He reeled backward, his sword dropped. A soldier caught him, drew him out of the mêlée, dropped him, and ran to rejoin the yelling, clawing group bent on cleaning out the rat's nest.

Sam crawled back to the breastworks, braced himself, raged, vomited, tried to get to his feet, sobbed "I'm useless!" His captain found him. "What in the name of God're you doing here? Get back to the surgeon, and stay there!" He obeyed after seeing that his men, by flinging burning pine knots down amongst the chanting and squealing defenders of the nest, had made a silence there.

By the middle of the afternoon, they could begin counting the dead. Exultant men came to the dressing station with the figures: Six hundred warriors killed inside the horseshoe, two hundred more fished out of the river—the rest of the thousand carried away by the swift current. No Indians save women and children were left alive of the force that had defended the horseshoe. Fifty of Jackson's soldiers were dead, and two hundred wounded. Such was the tale of Horseshoe Bend!

Jackson came amongst the wounded again at sun-

set, worn with emotion and fatigue, a pinched gray look on his thin face. He sat beside blanket-covered men, asked: "Are you comfortable? Are you in need of anything? Tennessee will remember your service this day!" He reached Sam, smiled, "I've been told, young man, you went back for a second dose of Creek medicine!"

Sam, pale and half unconscious, smiled and answered, "I'm proud to fight as long as I can for you, Sir." It was scarcely more than a whisper.

Jackson repeated his formula a bit hoarsely: "Are you comfortable, Lieutenant? Do you need anything?"

Chapter III

THE war spirit of the Creeks vanished at Horseshoe Bend, went up in the rancid smoke from the cross-log pyres on which the bodies of eight hundred warriors were turned to ashes. Their own prophets, and the fanatic Shawnee, Tecumtha, had been wrong; no avenging god of the red men had heeded their passionate prayers to send a destroying storm upon the white invaders. Before Sam was started north, tossed in a horsehide litter, he heard that Weatherford had surrendered to Jackson.

One bullet the surgeon removed from his shoulder, but he would not risk cutting for the other. "Not in the field, my boy," he said. "You could not survive the operation."

It was a slow, agonizing journey north. He was two hundred and fifty miles from home, in the hands of medical orderlies anxious to end their service and return to their families. At the end of the second day he was laid on blankets in a corner of the storeroom at Fort Williams, and left there when the contingent of less severely wounded started up the river for Tennessee.

"They're leaving me to die!" Sam protested.

"We'll see what can be done," promised the captain in command of the depot; and he asked his medical officer: "Is there a chance of getting Lieutenant Houston home alive?"

"None that I can see."

"Well, do what you can for him."

Jackson arrived at Fort Williams, heard Sam's plea, "I want to try to get home, Sir!" The General talked with the surgeon, listened to his verdict, "It would be cruel, Sir, to send him on from here in a litter."

"But, damn it, Sir," said Jackson, "it's what he wants! Let him start at once; he may have more life in him than you think."

For the next ten days Sam endured a seemingly endless, unendurable torture, fever, retching, the grave-cold weight of blankets wet by all-night rains, the depression of men conducting a living corpse over rough hill trails. At the end of the journey he was a barely living gray skeleton, with a halo of pale beard half concealing bony jaws, his long hair matted, nauseated by the stench from the suppurating wound.

At last they crossed the Tennessee River to Mr. Sheffey's store. "My God, is it you, Sam?" Sheffey bade the orderlies, "Carry him into my house." Mrs. Sheffey shooed her pity-stricken daughter away, had the soldier stretcher-bearers strip the wasted body, washed him with warm water, cut off the tangled mass of hair. "Mercy on us, Sam," she crooned, "we can't let you go home looking like a scarecrow, no

indeed. Now take some of this turkey broth; it wouldn't hurt a flea—just a spoonful, Sam."

Rest at last! A blessed relief from the wrenching, agonizing sway of the litter. June had come, and Sam's bed was close to a window, a sheet over his skeleton shanks, a nightshirt of Mr. Sheffey's open on the basket of bones that was his chest. He could eat now without vomiting, no longer had to strain with the effort of holding on to life. If only that damned shoulder would stop hurting, and festering!

Sam forbade the Sheffeys to write to his mother before he was able to go home. "Ma and my sisters would come and make a fuss over me, and I couldn't stand it." But Sarah Sheffey did write to her dear friend, Eusabia McCracken: "We are so happy to know he will survive, and the Lord," said the pious Sarah, "is adding to his strength day by day. Mother says he is a dear patient invalid. I have been in once to see him, and oh, Eusabia, how terribly thin and gaunt he looked! I would not have known him except for his eyes; weeks and weeks he suffered and wasted away, but now, thank the Lord, he is mending."

Eusabia ran to her mother with the letter, "Mother, I must go!"

Mrs. McCracken read Sarah's words slowly, then: "Very well, my dear, pack your saddlebags and I'll send your brother with you." When her daughter was out of hearing: "What is the world coming to!

A young girl running after a young man like that; in my girlhood—well——"

It was no use to scold or argue; the mother knew that 'Sabia would go if she had to steal off at night and walk the forty miles to Kingston. So much for being red-headed and wilful!

The next morning, after Sam had been bathed and fed and a fresh bandage had been adjusted to his shoulder, Mrs. Sheffey smiled at him and said, "You have a visitor waiting to see you." She opened the door, beckoned, and closed it behind Eusabia.

"Red Head!" Sam's good arm went out; she dropped to her knees beside him, her face against his cheek, whispering: "Sammie! My Sammie!"

He chuckled. "You couldn't keep away, could you, Red Head?"

"I came to visit Sarah," she lied adorably.

On a broad-backed plodding old horse, Sam rode home in July. Getting down, he rested his head for a moment on his mother's breast. "Ma, I'm so glad!"

"Sammie, we thought—we didn't hear—oh, my son!"

His sisters crowded forward to kiss him, and his brothers to shake his hand gingerly, so tottery he was, as though he were about to fall apart. Smiling, Will accused, "Sam, you're so thin you could hide in the shadder of a fence post!"

Jackson, now a major general in the army of the United States, had not forgotten; there awaited Sam

a commission as second lieutenant in the regular service, dating back to May, and a brief, cherished note from the pen of Old Hickory himself: "I am pleased to hear that you are not dead nor of a mind to die. You will make a compleat convalesence before reporting to your command. Beleave me your friend, A. Jackson."

Fired by the réclame of the young hero, Brother Bob carried out an often-repeated threat to go to war himself. He marched away to the tune, "Oh, 'tis my delight on a stormy night in the springtime of the year——"

But by midsummer of 1814 so many men of Blount County had followed the drums and fifes out of Maryville that the most significant comment Bob's enlistment aroused was, "So he's quit work and gone after the bounty too!" Patriotism was not running so high now that the British peril was remote—Jackson was somewhere near New Orleans.

Sam, recovering his strength, wore his honours modestly. Not he, but his brothers and the Hunter boys and Jimmie Gillespie, boasted in tavern talk and muster day gatherings of Sam's valour, created the legend that only through the extraordinary bravery of Third Lieutenant Houston was the battle of Horseshoe Bend won!

Eusabia noted the growth of the legend, Sam's increasing fame, and watched for symptoms of conceit. She never saw them; to warnings against being set up by all the talk, Sam offered a quizzical smile

and the reproof, "'Sabia, dear, that red head of yours will yet grow gray worrying over thy Sam!"

"It will not; I care less than nothing for you—so there!"

"Darling Red Head, I could kiss you for that, if I was stout enough to catch you." Then, very tenderly, careful of "this damned shoulder," Eusabia put her arms up and offered her fragrant lips as she whispered:

"Sammie, I'll give you a kiss this time"—as though it were the first, and might be the last!

Visiting at the McCracken home, sitting in the shade with Eusabia, Mrs. McCracken in the kitchen stewing blackberries and tantalizing with other hunger-rousing odours a ravenous convalescent appetite, Sam kept the girl talking for a time—cheerful neighbourhood gossip, news that came over the mountains from Virginia—then demanded that she should read from the poetry book she owned. Hesitantly, in sing-song stresses, she began:

"Fer-tile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine;
With herds the pas-ture thronged, with flocks the hills——"

Maddeningly, ostentatiously, Sam nodded, pretended to snore.

"Oh," she jumped up, "you're making fun of me again!" She ran indoors, flung down the book, "Mother, let me help; give me the ladle."

"Yes, indeed, child," and Mrs. McCracken went out to sit beside Sam, fan her heated face with her

apron and complain, "I don't see how we ever stand this awful hot weather!"

"I like it, Mother Mac; I'm as cold-blooded as a frog."

"Poor boy! We'll have chicken potpie for dinner."

"Mother Mac! Truly?" Her potpies were famous. Sam knew, when sitting up to her table with slack trouser band, what visions had troubled those half-starved fighting men down yonder in Alabama, why they had deserted Jackson at Christmas time. The fleshpots! Sam loved them.

And drink. As his strength returned, it was worth a hard day in the woods and the labour of chopping to find a bee tree and bring in a bucket of rich honey to be stirred into a keg of whisky, then with a dozen stout guzzlers wear out the night—or cache it near by while they danced, a sweating, roistering roomful of reeling men and casual road wenches, taking great gulps of the sweetened liquor out of tin cups and passing drink to the fiddlers as they swayed and sawed and tapped out with their feet the tune of "Buffalo Girls" and "Old Dan Tucker." Midnight saw the weaklings on the way home, but not Sam; he would stay "till the last dog's hung!"

He had great joy of one crack-o'-dawn hour at a tavern bout when young Tom Lounsby, the lawyer, full primed, was moved to rise, gravely command silence, and ape the manner and speech of a bombastic quack doctor he had heard: "Gen'lemen, you will be astonished when I tell you that the learned

gen'leman's *modus loquendi* was truly gigantic, an' that he did forthwith spout the mos' stupendous technicalities overladen with titillating oddimentalities, whimsicalities, coxicalities, an' elaborated—I mean elongated elaborifications of sesquipedalities in exchange for his medicamentums . . . "

Sam, laughing, swore he'd memorize that.

Such occasional sprees, he said, helped him to get well, recover his strength; they bettered his appetite! If in certain pious households there was talk of young Sam Houston going to the devil with an approving slap on the back from Andy Jackson, the great majority were delighted to see him, to listen to his stories, rail at him for being "too damned modest to tell what you done down there at Horseshoe Bend," trade political gossip, whisper the rumour that Ben So-and-so would have to marry Hattie Jones now!

At quarter-sessions day in the fall, the crops having been gathered and the bland days lingering, the up-and-coming men of the county gathered in front of the Maryville courthouse: members of the grand jury panel, lawyers—some from Knoxville and Kingston, retained for their eloquence in criminal cases—merchants, ginners, mill men, distillers, planters, officers on furlough, came together to gossip, trade, collect overdue accounts, act as witnesses, serve on petit juries. They were the élite of East Tennessee, not to be judged by their muddy boots and rough clothes. With them, Sam lounged, listened, capped funny

stories, spent much of his lieutenant's pay for rum and in betting on horse races.

With the cold weather came a restlessness, Sam's chronic curse, as Mother Houston said, and a fear lest the wounded shoulder, aching unceasingly, should disable him. "I've heard," he told his mother one day as he saddled a horse and packed his saddlebags, "there's a miracle-working surgeon over the mountains at Lexington, and I'm going to see him." But at the end of the long journey he decided that the man was no better than the Knoxville sawbones, and rode on to Washington, a disordered wreck of tumbled brick and newly burned timbers, reminder of British occupation. Nor could he find relief there.

Back from the gloom-oppressed Capital he rode, to visit the old Virginia settlement where he was born; and not until spring did he come again to Knoxville. Surprisingly, he was met there by the blare of bugles, wild shrieks of joy and the braying of the extempore verses of "The Hunters of Kentucky":

"Old Packenham he made his brags
If he in fight was lucky,
He'd have our gals an' cotton bags
In spite of Ol' Kentucky!

"But when so close we saw 'em wink
We thought it time to stop 'em . . .

"Oh, Kentucky, the hunters of Kentucky!"

The news of Jackson's belated victory at New Orleans was only hours old at Knoxville. Sam was swept

into the whirling mass; a man, recognizing him, roared, "Here's a young feller that fit an' bled with Ol' Hickory at the Horseshoe!" Others hoisted him to their shoulders, carried him to the speakers' stand to loud cries of "Speech, give us a speech, Sam!"

He looked down from the platform upon the eager, expectant faces. He must speak. He must say something to make them shout even louder than they were shouting, use resounding, unfamiliar words that would stir them, increase their patriotic frenzy, make them forget that amongst them stood faint-of-hearts, bounty seekers, backbiters, deserters. He recalled what he had said to Eusabia of the power of flattery and fine phrases.

"Gentlemen!" Tall, thin, his thatch of fluffy brown hair catching the late afternoon light and forming a semiluminous crown on his head, his cheeks flushed, he instinctively flung his right arm upward and outward. The gesture hurt his shoulder intolerably, and the arm fell suddenly; those who stood close saw him wince and set his jaws as perspiration mottled his chin, and a murmur of sympathy arose.

Deliberately, rhythmically he spoke: "Future chroniclers will recount in adequate measure the glorious achievements of that great leader whose name is on every tongue. To-day I can but twine my poor insignificant garland for his brow, the tribute of one humble admirer. I have seen him amidst the clashing tumult of battle, heard his clarion voice in command rise above the horrid clamour of savage war cries,

inspiring dauntless men to heroic deeds——" and on to the climax, "Fame imperishable shall be his!"

A whirlpool advanced upon him; leaping, shouting men fought to get at him and carry him on their shoulders; those who had seen him wince cried, "Easy; look out for his shoulder!" The parade ended at Robley's Inn, with the singing, the vast bass roar of "Oh, Kentucky, the hunters of Kentucky!" Then supper, the hot confusion of crowded bars, dawn, a feeling of exhaustion, a long heavy sleep. Waking in the afternoon, Sam remembered, "I roused 'em!"

He was half exultant, half remorseful at the thought; it was almost as though he had put out of his life something fine, lost a bit of his sincerity!

Eusabia's sarcasm, coming too soon after her welcome-home kiss, disturbed him, too, "Well, Mr. Demosthenes, I hear you made the folks at Knoxville throw up their hats; I hope it makes you happy to know you can do it!"

"Lay it on, 'Sabia," he smiled wryly. "I sometimes think you're all pepper and vinegar, damned if I don't."

"Not 'sugar an' spice an' all that's nice'?" she mocked, and swiftly became repentant. "I'm sorry, Sammie, truly! It's *you* I love, not your talk or your manners."

"I'm sure you'd take the conceit out of me, Red Head, if I could stand your battering!"

They quarrelled, and Sam rode away in angry dignity, thinking, "She didn't hear my speech and has

no right to accuse me of spouting highfalutin nonsense!"

Sam believed that Jackson was a great man, a great general; he had meant every word of his tribute. Before reporting to his regiment at Knoxville, he rode over to make it up with his sweetheart. "Kiss me nicely, 'Sabia dear," he teased, "ere I go again for to be a soldier."

"Sammie," she wailed, "you'll be the death of me —an old maid of twenty! But here's your kiss." It was ardent.

"You hurt my shoulder then, darling Red Head!"

Peace, and the mustering out of volunteers; Jackson came back to Tennessee, and showed that he had not forgotten Sam by having him promoted to first lieutenant and ordering, "Report to First Regiment headquarters at New Orleans when you're fit for duty."

"I'll go at once, Sir," Sam said, for the opportunity was offering to make a romantic voyage down the Cumberland from Nashville to the Ohio and the Mississippi with two young men bound for their Louisiana home from Harvard College. With them, and a varied assortment of books in a waterproofed box, weighting the skiff they used, he made the leisurely trip, read greedily, listened to their word pictures of Boston, Lexington, Bunker Hill, and the Washington Elm at Cambridge, recaptured for the time his passion for the classic past. At Natchez,

they had their first sight of a river steamboat, and took passage in it for New Orleans.

His shoulder grew ever more painful; in a futile attempt to remove the remaining bullet, the post surgeon all but killed him. He scribbled a line to Eusabia; "I'll have to spend weeks, perhaps months, in the hospital. I hate it, with no one to read poetry to me." She would have gone to him if her mother had not put her foot down very firmly. "There's a limit, Eusabia, beyond which a girl must not go!" and, later, "Even if you went, and God knows how you'd manage to get there, they wouldn't allow you the run of a military hospital." She must content herself with writing, and sending off packages she hoped would reach him.

Months of wasting pain Sam endured, propped on a cot in a bare, whitewashed room, reading the books his two young friends of the river voyage brought him, translations of Cæsar's Commentaries, the Odyssey, *Pilgrim's Progress, The Vicar of Wakefield, Shakespeare.* The surgeon, his company officers, his new friends and their friends visited him as he fought grimly but in a growing depression for life. In April, driven to furious protest by the unseasonable smothering heat, he swore: "By God, I won't stay here and die by inches! Can't you send me to a doctor somewhere that can help me?"

"Perhaps in New York, if you care to risk the long voyage." The post surgeon gave him the name of a doctor there.

The sea revived his spirit, and the New York man cheered him, even though he declared: "It's useless to probe again for the bullet. I can only build up your strength to withstand the drain upon your vitality and recommend good food and rest—I'll have you on your feet soon."

The doctor was as good as his word. When Sam could walk as far up the Broadway as the Canal and down to the Battery without becoming exhausted, he fell in with another Tennesseean, Davy Crockett, who welcomed him like a long-lost brother: "Young Sam, I've been in this strange, mad city for two months—got here the morning of the first of May, and the way the people were flying around I thought a plague had fallen on them. I stopped a man and asked, and he said: 'Oh, it's moving day!' Looks like they all change houses once a year."

They attended the theatre, heard a concert by a famous Italian soprano. "You know, Sam," Crockett said, "that singing ain't half up to the tooting of a Mississippi river-boat horn!"

"So you've seen the river boats, too?"

"Sure, I've seen the elephant! I went up to Boston, and a fellow took me to Faneuil Hall; I saw women working in a factory where they put rubber garments together without stitching; I was afraid to go out to Harvard College lest they force an LL.D. on me! Now I'm going back to the woods, where a man can have elbow room."

Sam soon followed his new friend westward, on a slow journey broken by stops at Trenton, where he was easily beaten in a shooting match by an elegant veteran of the New Jersey Militia; at Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, rising from ruins, and at the old home in Virginia. Near the end of the year, he arrived at the office of the adjutant general at Nashville to report once more for duty. "I've seen the elephant, Sir," he smiled, quoting Davy Crockett, "and now I want to go to work."

"You will remain here," said that officer, noting his leanness, "and devote yourself to getting well—General Jackson's orders!"

In the ten months of nearly complete freedom from routine that followed, the new world of Tennessee politics opened to Sam. Jackson saw to that, introducing him to the eloquent Grundy; to Trimble, the learned lawyer; to the huge and astute Judge Haywood; to Overton, Dickinson, and other Democrats who were fighting to get the state capital away from the powerful Whigs entrenched at Knoxville.

In the early winter, however, though gaunt and troubled by the still unhealed wound, he went off at Jackson's request to act as sub-agent for his Cherokee friends, invincible Andy himself leaving for Florida to complete the conquest of the Seminole Indians. Sam's job was to induce the Cherokees to quit their homes and go west, provide for them food and blankets, cooking pots, rifles and ammunition and boats

for the voyage down the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers and up the Arkansas River into the new territory of Arkansas.

It was distasteful work. His heart was with the great majority of the tribe who still strove passionately and unceasingly to hold their birthright. With John Ross and others of the delegation chosen to protest against the forced "treaty" sending the Cherokees west, he rode to Washington. With them he called on Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of War, to put that gentleman in a rage against him because he appeared in buckskin and moccasins, with a blanket draped across his shoulders, and also because of recent charges that he had meddled in a matter of slave smuggling from the Spanish province to the western states."

"Sir," Sam protested, "I did only what I conceived to be my duty in preventing the smuggling of slaves into and out of the Cherokee lands! As for my dress——"

"Enough, young man!" Calhoun interrupted. "Hereafter, you will come to me in proper uniform, not in masquerade costume."

Furious, Sam secured a hearing from President Monroe, who listened attentively and promised, "There will be an investigation of this slave smuggling, and the facts shall be made known." The President smiled when told of Calhoun's rebuke on account of the Indian leggings and blanket. "Just between ourselves, young man," he said, "the Secretary

is something of a dandy and a stickler for form. In fact, your costume does seem a bit bizarre here in Washington. You are still in the army, I believe?"

The promised investigation vindicated Sam, exposing the lies of the slave runners, but he found no sympathy for his Cherokee friends save from the handful of New England representatives in Congress, and nothing but ridicule for his "savage" dress. Sore and discouraged, he led the delegation back to the Hiwassee home of John Jolly, who was preparing to remove his family, slaves, and household goods to Arkansas.

Jolly listened to Sam's pungent comments on the fruitless journey and his opinion of the effete dandies of Washington with a smile. "Sam," said the Chief, "them folks back there don' know about Indians; long time since they seen any! No use talkin' to them. I go before they kick me out."

"You'll see," Sam prophesied, "one of our western men'll be President some day, and then——"

"You thinkin' about Andrew Jackson?" Jolly's smile broadened. "Yes, he know the Cherokees; we help him fight them Creeks, but he kick us out jus' the same! Sam, you are like one red ear of corn in a basket of white ears."

"I'm damned if I'll serve a government any longer that won't do justice to my friends!"

"Maybe so you better quit, stop workin' for folks that tell you what you mus' do; better if some day

you get elected to the gover'ment an' tell somebody else what he got to do!"

That was what Mr. Meigs had advised, too. Had he been following a blind trail? He had given years, strength, and health to the army. Then peace had come, a new era of good feeling—a phrase he had heard often in Washington—and of expanding prosperity; fortune-seeking merchants, manufacturers, steamboat men, and railroad builders were overflowing the frontiers; a fashionable society was setting up new standards of dress and manners and entertainment at Knoxville, and even at Nashville, where officers danced at the Inn in white pants and vests, blue tail-coats and ruffled shirts, drove in carriages with belles in Canton crêpe and fifty-dollar velvet bonnets. On the streets, officers strutted in cockaded hats and polished brass buttons, and commanded a police force! Soldiers were no longer used except to remove Indians from the path of the whites. The army no longer offered a career.

Sam resigned from the service.

Chapter IV

WHILE in Washington, Sam had heard from his mother of the death of his brother Bob—the first break in the family circle since coming to Tennessee. Though he had not been close to Bob, the news had been a shock.

Returning to Maryville, he found his mother shaken, much aged; she seemed to have shrunk physically, too, and his heart was wrenched with pity, with the realization that life had been hard for her. He took her in his arms, held her tight, muttered words of affection as she sobbed on his breast.

"Sammie," she whispered, trying to control her emotions, "I—I didn't—I couldn't write you the truth about Bob. He—he killed himself."

"Mother! Why——" he gasped, incredulous.

But she confirmed the fact as she brushed away her tears. "He was in love with Charity Rowden, and she wouldn't have him. He came back from New Orleans a different man, discontented and unhappy; army life was bad for him, I know; and when Charity sent him away—— Oh, Sammie, these senseless wars!" Growing calmer presently, she said: "I'm glad you're through soldiering, my boy! But what now?"

"I mean to study law, Mother. I've talked with Judge Trimble, at Nashville. He'll take me into his office, and General Jackson will help me when the time comes, if I go into politics—and I intend to do that." He became a bit solemn. "I believe I can serve my country best in that way."

"I wish you'd marry and settle down, Son."

He shook his head. "I'll have all I can do to keep myself for Heaven knows how long; I couldn't ask any woman to share my poverty."

Though no name was spoken, both were thinking of Eusabia. Sam's new ambition, the years of wandering, of illness, his disappointment, and the fresh contacts he had made seemed to have dimmed his boyish passion for her. Yet when he saw her again he felt his heart leap at the sight of her slim straightness, the flame of her hair in the sun, the sweet, steady look in her eyes, her firm, kind mouth.

"I'm leaving you once more, 'Sabia." He held her by the shoulders and met her clear gaze. "I must go away if I'm to learn the law; there's no chance here. I wish I could take you with me!" He bent and kissed her. "You're worth more than all the girls together I've seen in my journeyings."

She managed to smile up at him, though the tears rose to her eyes. "It's no great matter, Sammie," she said, "whether I'm with you or not so long as you think that! I'm old enough—twenty-four last birthday—and, maybe, wise enough to know that my love will last, sweetened by kisses or not. I'm yours,

whether you ever come for me or not, whether you love me or not, I do believe!"

He kissed her again. "Darling Red Head, I'll make you proud of me, and when I come I'll have something fit to lay at your feet!"

She watched him ride out of sight, waved her hand as he lifted his hat with a sweep of the arm before vanishing behind a clump of young oaks, then made her way blindly into the woods. It was May, and her heedless feet crushed wild strawberries. Their fragrance rose to her nostrils; through her tears she saw the stain on her white stockings above her low slippers. "My heart," she whispered, "bleeds too, Sammie, you've trampled on it so long!"

Judge Trimble had come into Tennessee from the same Virginia settlement as the widow Houston, and in the same year. He was a restless, burning little wisp of a man, "a hogshead of brains set on pipe-stem legs!" Before thirty, he had served the state of Tennessee as circuit judge. In the last five years, at Nashville, he had pushed to the front in his profession, ranking now with lawyers like Grundy, Dickinson, Overton, and Whiteside. His office on Market Street smelled of calf-bound law books; one shelf bore an unusual collection of English and American history; tin boxes of case records and briefs were piled high; and two busy clerks buzzed in and out.

He greeted Sam, then with a touch of formal courtesy: "I trust, sir, that your estimable mother is

in good health? . . . Now here," the little lawyer, placing Sam into a chair, swept a thin arm around to indicate the packed shelves, "is your new armoury, the weapons and ammunition of the law. Blackstone first; you'll do well to read the Commentaries over and over, prayerfully and diligently, for they are the foundation stone of our practice. You will also read Coke; Chitty on Pleadings, Bills, Contracts, and Criminal Law; Fern on Remainders; Sugdon on Vendors, and Williams on Executors—but all in good time. Now to Blackstone!" Trimble rose to jerk the heavy volume of Commentaries out of the dignified ranks and plump it down under Sam's eyes.

"How long, Sir, do you think it will be before I may hope for admission to the bar?"

"Eighteen months, perhaps two years. It will depend upon your own diligence and intelligence."

To study, his long thin legs thrust straight out beneath a pine table at a window of the office library and his thick brown hair always tousled, or at his room in the boarding house on Water Street with the voice of Old Cruff, the town watchman, calling the hours of the night, "Past e-leven o'-clock, a-t'undering an' a-lightning an' a tam rainy night!" was a delight. The change from physical effort and army routine was good for him, as were Mrs. Bennett's abundant meals. The early morning walk to the office, the hours of work, Trimble's approval of his progress, brief evening sessions at near-by taverns, limiting himself to a single stiff drink, or occasional

evenings at the Trimble home when friends dropped in for chat and a game of bézique, made up the new measure of life for Sam.

He had a sense of well-being, of welcome to a career that promised much to his ambition; his shoulder, though still refusing to heal, gave him little discomfort. He raced through the books, maintaining a furious concentration. In a swift, unreckoned succession of dawns, noons, and midnights, risings, mealtimes, rapid-fire conferences with Judge Trimble, bedtimes, the summer passed. Maple trees yellowed in the yards, the first dusting of snow came, wild turkeys hung in the markets. He was preparing to go home for Christmas when he ventured to say to his mentor, "Sir, I believe I'm ready for the examination."

"Within seven months! It's not possible. However, sit down and let me ask you——" Trimble ran over a wide variety of questions, got ready answers. "Extraordinary! A marvellous memory. When you return, I'll arrange with Judge Haywood for your test. My respects to your estimable mother; you may tell her, for me, that she has a brilliant son!"

Mrs. Houston repeated, "Splendid, Sammie, splendid!" though she could not fully appreciate his achievements; six months, or six years, the task of preparing for admission to the bar was beyond her comprehension. It was equally mysterious to Sam's brothers and sisters, who were beginning to follow divergent trails of their own. Isabella was engaged

to a planter on Ellejoy Creek; Jim was apprenticed to his bachelor uncle, a blacksmith whose shop he might reasonably expect to inherit; and Will was acquiring land of his own. To his family, Sam was almost a stranger, a bit difficult to feel at ease with. Will wanted to take him to the tavern and test his capacity for drink and song and banter, but hesitated to propose it; Sam might refuse to go, call the place a doggery, a resort for low fellows. "There's a trace of the dandy in our law-stuffed brother," said Will to the others.

Eusabia seemed to think so, too. "What dignity!" she burlesqued his new way of walking. "The airs you put on, Sammie, and the long words you use! You ought to be a Presbyterian elder."

Sam laughed soundlessly. "Doubtless I'm being moulded by my preceptor, an excellent learned man, 'Sabia, and a very able advocate."

"I'd rather have you model yourself after General Jackson, if you care for a plain old maid's opinion," she said.

"I care more for your kisses, 'Sabia!"

"You've learned to say that at the Nashville Inn?"

"Are we to quarrel again, Red Head?"

"We seem to be," she mourned. She was in his arms, but lax and hostile.

"You believe I don't love you, 'Sabia? I swear I've not seen any other who——"

"Why should I care who you've seen? I'm not jealous; it's only that there's a crust over the old

you, Sammie, that I can't break through." Her words hurt and angered him; their parting kiss was not thrilling, stiff lips on lips that quivered to the thought, "This may be our last; oh, have I lost my Sammie?"

From Eusabia he rode to the tavern, astonishing Will by the great slugs of sugared rum he drank without showing a trace of intoxication. In the morning, however, he had to be shaken awake so that he could catch the Nashville stage.

Trimble had arranged for Sam's examination for admission to the bar during Judge Haywood's Christmas holiday. "Haywood is at his farm, expecting you. He may perhaps be a trifle gruff because of the interruption of his leisure, but he will be just." Sam found his examiner in front of a wide fireplace that made the low-ceilinged room hot as an oven. He lay on an oxhide stretched over a stout low frame, in trousers and shirt, open at the neck, his bare feet close to the fire, his three hundred and fifty pounds of flesh and bone looking as big as the carcass of a slaughtered steer. Gray-grizzled hair crowned a huge head, and a Jovian beard hid the folds of his great jowls.

He rumbled a greeting, then: "Yes, I remember meeting you, young man. Trimble's crazy to send you to me after but seven months of dawdling with law books!"

"Perhaps, Sir," Sam said with spirit, "you'll be a better judge of that after you've questioned me."

"Perhaps. Sit down here, close to me. Jackson

thought you were a soldier—why did you get out of the army?" Without waiting for an answer, he put another unexpected inquiry, "Are you engaged to marry some country wench as soon as you get two shillings to rub together?"

"No, Sir, although——"

"Of course you've got your Audrey! I should say"—the judge lifted himself to an elbow, propped his head momentarily on his palm as he gazed shrewdly at Sam—"you were born to trouble women, and suffer from them. But keep this thought with you: the law is a mistress that won't lie content three in a bed, when the third is a shapely woman."

Sam smiled. "I'm not monastic, Sir, nor yet uxorious."

"The law," Haywood continued, his mind leaping to another point, "has become a springboard from which men plunge into nearly everything else, storekeeping, planting, whisky making, gambling, politics. Above all, politics! Why the devil do pot-licking office seekers want to be known as members of the Tennessee bar?"

Before putting his first formal question, the judge bawled for his stout slave Darius. "Here, take hold of the tail of this bull's hide and haul me away from the fire!" The negro performed the service gravely and was dismissed. "I need a cool head for this business, young man."

For two hours the rapid questioning went on, covering the origin and philosophy of the English

common law, civil and criminal practice, evidence, codes. Now and then Haywood offered brief explanations and comments, growled approval. Thrice he had the negro in to adjust his strange cot, build up the fire, fetch a jug of cider. At length he lay back, relaxed and silent for a time, then spoke slowly: "I'll certify you, young man. Tell me, where do you mean to practise?"

"I believe Judge Trimble would give me a place in his office, Sir, though I haven't yet asked; he needs another clerk."

"Don't do that. Begin by being your own boss. You've taken other men's orders long enough. Go to a county seat—Murfreesboro, Gallatin, or Lebanon—and come back to Nashville only after you've tried yourself against country lawyers; they're smarter than you'd think. Find out, in the country, if you can be a man and remain a lawyer while waiting for clients, where the tavern bar will seem the friendliest place in town, and a tavern wench in a warm bed at midnight more appealing than cold fingers, a blue nose, and a book of Commentaries, by candlelight in the office."

"You seem to think, Sir," Sam began heatedly.

"Think? Hell, I know!" The judge fixed his eyes on the youngster's tall and broadening figure. "You're no anchorite. When I was your age, my boy—but I've finished with you. Get out; I've wasted more time on you than you deserve. Good luck!" he gripped Sam's

hand with a powerful bear-like paw, and as he sank back roared, "Darius!" Sam left him heartened and resolute.

With a boxful of law books, purchased on credit, and useful letters from Trimble and Judge Haywood in his pocket, the fledgling lawyer nailed his plain board sign, "Sam Houston, Atty.," beside the doorway of a one-room frame building across the square from the county courthouse at Lebanon. Thirty miles from Nashville, on a slope overlooking the looping bends of the Cumberland River, lying like a dot in the parentheses of two small creeks, the country town seemed remote and lifeless. To Eusabia he wrote: "It would be a fine place for hibernating bears, but it's dull for me. I run to the window every time an oxcart creaks in from some farm or the Nashville stage stops at the Inn to change horses. Solitude! I'm not accustomed to it; and even in the daytime I'm nearly startled out of my chair when a burning log falls apart in my fireplace.

"I spend whole days preparing and conducting in silent pantomime imaginary cases. I always win, and turn around to a fancied spectator sitting by the fire and ask, 'Wasn't that well done, Red Head?' But alas, she vanishes without speaking. You must write at once, and tell me you haven't forgotten thy Sam."

On evenings when print seemed to grow intolerable, the Inn called; at a table with his one self-permitted drink to last out the session, he talked with men about the Creek campaign and discussed

local politics or listened to stories of the outlaw Harps, Big and Little. "Yes, Sir, Big Harp came to his end in a way to make your flesh creep! He was run down by a posse, badly crippled, an' set upon by a feller that'd lost his wife an' baby in one o' their shootin' an' burnin' raids. This feller run up to Big Harp, took out his huntin' knife, cut the meat all around his neck, then twisted off his head an' stuck it up on a pole at the crossroads."

"By jacks, that's so! An' Little Harp lit out fer West Tennessee an' down Mississippi way to jine Mason's gang that rode out o' Natchez."

With spring came revival of life in Lebanon. The county court woke to its seasonal grind. Lawyers, witnesses, planters, local politicians, crowded the Inn. Cases were brought to trial that uncorked the florid eloquence of the county prosecutor, who jangled the nerves of an irate judge.

Sam was drafted by the Court to defend penniless victims of the grand jury's findings. In his first case, the trial jury watched with interest as he rose slowly, like a tall reed coming upright after a strong gust of wind, and warmed to his shy, appealing smile. His opening words were deliberately groping, questioning:

"I don't know—I may be wrong—but I believe we all try to do the best we can—right sometimes, wrong sometimes—even grand juries! Now the presentment against my client would indicate——" he made an inclusive summary of the indictment, and of

the damaging evidence, paused a moment. "Does it look dark for my client? Yes. But will you be patient with me while I present this man's side of the case? Be just and charitable to one who is poor and all but friendless? I know you will!" Methodically, he took up the evidence, analyzing, appraising it. "Doubtful, is it not, gentlemen?" and of another point, "Here the state has certainly failed to prove the charge; do you see?" Finally the short, mountingly eloquent plea: "Shall justice be measured out to men according to the weight of their purses, or the number of their powerful friends? Did our forefathers fly from Old World tyranny in order to reëstablish injustice in America? No! We who have followed the over-mountain trails into Tennessee guard with jealous vigilance our new democracy that pledges equality for all. Did I say my client was friendless? I was wrong; no man can be friendless here!"

The judge had watched and listened closely. On the way to supper, he spoke a grudging tribute to the youngster: "Grundy, I thought our débutant did very well; he has a useful power of persuasion, he impresses the jury with his sense of fairness."

"Yes, I liked his style," the well-known Nashville lawyer agreed. "The fact is, he made out a better case for the prosecution than the prosecutor himself—then tore it to pieces!"

Sam studied the judge as well as his cases, taking care not to ruffle him needlessly, and got his clients off. Before the term ended, paying clients were com-

ing to him in such numbers that his little office became a busy workshop. A period of flowering followed. He had an encouraging measure of success in clashes with older jury exhorters. News of his brilliant beginning, his colourful and persuasive speeches, was carried to Nashville. Jackson heard with satisfaction that his tall protégé, who had raised his hopes and won his liking, was justifying his judgment.

Jackson did more than congratulate. In the summer, he secured Sam's appointment as adjutant general of the state militia, with the rank of colonel. "It's hardly more than a title, young man," shrewd Andy pointed out, "but it will give you prestige. This fall Davidson County elects a district attorney, and it will be your chance to come back to Nashville with jingling bells!"

Sam campaigned with the ardour of a preacher, with the old physical vigour he had recaptured since leaving the army. He had learned the value of contrast, and at country meetings he was learned, canny, fiery, as in town he was plain in manner and colloquial in speech. To the God-fearing, he cried out dramatically for the righteous enforcement of the law, quoting Holy Writ. At tavern bars, he gave the impression of human tolerance, riding away at dawn to the music of bibulous cheers.

He was elected over his Whig rival by a record majority.

The day come for his return to Nashville. His

boxes sent off, he waited for the stage in courthouse square. The fall session of court was on, and a crowd was in Lebanon. "Give us a speech before you leave, Sam!" someone shouted. Others took up the demand, and after a seemly hesitation he mounted the steps of the courthouse.

"Friends!" it was wonderful what he put into the word. With a gesture widely embracing, he went on: "No man could have better friends than I have found here. I was a stranger and ye took me in with such generous sincerity that I find it hard to leave you. Only the call to another field—pray with me that it may prove to be one of fruitful endeavour!—could tear me from the beloved peace of Lebanon. Uprooting is painful, breaking ties that bind my heart to yours wounds me deeper than ever redskin arrows and bullets did. Will you wish me well? Nay, I do not need to ask! As I clasp your hands on setting forth, I know that I shall hear from your lips a cordial Godspeed, and a devout wish for my guidance in the ways of justice and righteousness—even old T. V., 'Tamnation Vexation' Muller, who stands there amongst you will say, 'Tam your soul, Sam, I hope dey don' hang you up dere!' "

They shouted, laughed at his characteristic final tag of relief from solemnity, and passed him down the steps to the waiting stage. Thrilled, Sam saw that he had moved them; wet eyelids and unnaturally loud voices betrayed their feeling. Muller crowded close

to cackle, "By tam, Sam, you speaked like you meant vat you said!"

"I did, T. V.!" Sam gripped his hand and looked unfalteringly into the old cynic's eyes.

"Vell, it don' matter so long as *you* don' belief efery tam t'ing you hear!"

Chapter V

THE year that followed as district attorney at Nashville Sam used well. He was twenty-seven, mature, vigorous; he was handsome and dressed with care, though some thought a bit flashily; his inches alone made him stand out above his fellows, and he bore his great frame with a grace and ease acquired from his free life with the Indians. Women called his a noble head; his eyes were flashing and proud; his hair, thick and rebellious, he wore somewhat long and brushed back from his forehead in the fashion of the moment.

Society took him up; he was not only presentable and brilliant, with arresting charm, but, as a friend and protégé of Jackson, might count upon a great future. Old Hickory, the one military leader in the pitiful struggle of 1812 and '14 who had been able to restore America's faith in herself as a nation of fighters, loomed colossal in the minds of the West.

Sam loved the réclame of his reëntry, but he knew he must not fall under the delusion that without effort he could retain his prestige. He was only at the beginning of a career. As district attorney, he must measure himself against the Trimbles and Grundys of Nashville, the Olympians of the Tennessee bar.

He worked hard, proved himself a successful prosecutor, quick to see the essentials of a case, relentless in pursuing an advantage. He cultivated a persuasive, powerful voice, indulged in flashes of fiery eloquence and broad satire that won juries and delighted courtroom listeners. Now strongly Democratic and committed to the Jacksonian ideal, Nashville rose to one of his thrusts while prosecuting a prisoner accused of stealing a poor widow's only horse:

"Gentlemen, we have here a thief who steals from the weak and helpless; is that not the perfection of depravity? Oh, for the pencil of a Hogarth to draw in unforgettable lines this thief's progress, this hopeless degradation of a human spirit! Yet, gentlemen, this creature was born in a respectable Virginia home —but of Whig parents!" His tone changed to one of puzzled inquiry, "Perhaps that explains——" the laughter of the audience and of the jurors interrupted him; and the judge smiled as he rapped for order.

It was said that he "put on a good show," and his appearances in court drew men of political importance from far outside the boundaries of Davidson district who predicted, "Mark my words, that young man will be heard from."

He found time, too, for the social round, fashionable suppers at the Inn, dinings and dances at the McGavocks', the Washingtons', the Trabues', Easter fishing parties at old Captain Hoggett's, where Stan Hoggett played the fiddle and his brother Jim the

flute for evening quadrilles. He attended plays, won the friendship of young Forrest, then earnestly training himself to become an actor of Shakespearean tragedies, knew Russell and Row, and their actress wives, who put on the lively melodrama, *The Robbers*, in the old salt warehouse they had turned into a theatre.

In a letter which even the Nashville *Whig* displayed in a prominent position, Sam resigned after a year; no man, he said, who did not have an independent fortune could afford to serve long in "an office the emoluments of which are so inconsiderable," and made a plea for a more liberal fee system. His letter started a far-spread discussion of the state courts, and it was recalled that Jackson himself had been obliged to quit the Supreme Bench of Tennessee and return to planting in order to pay his debts.

He nailed the Lebanon sign, "Sam Houston, Atty.," beside the door of his Nashville office in preference to a more decorative one; he meant to make it plain that he was a plain man, a man of the people, a Democrat, and an ardent admirer of his friend and hero Jackson.

Growing numbers of clients, political activity, the always widening social horizon, the affairs of the militia kept him so fully occupied that he seldom found time to return to his home. Only Eliza, the youngest of his sisters, was unmarried, and his brothers no longer lived at home. He loved his

mother, but now they had little in common besides their affection; she admired him, was proud of his success, but she could not follow him into the new life.

The old easy, boyish contacts with Eusabia were lost, too. They met as friends, not as lovers. She seemed to have withdrawn, and Sam was no longer inclined to follow. Yet his admiration of her, rounded out into a vigorous womanhood, her hair a glory round her lifted head, with her quick gestures and salty tongue, was greater than ever. Admiration, not love! He did not seem able to confide in her now, and her life was too alien from his for her to understand the changes in him. To her he appeared formal, cold, and dandified. If she still loved him she hid her heart from him, and her tears he never saw; with him she was brusque, scornful, mocking. When he told her, on one of his rare visits to Maryville, that he had just been elected major general of division by the officers of the Tennessee militia, showing a pardonable glow of pride in the honour, she said, "That's fine, Sam"—she no longer called him Sammie—"it ought to help you in your social career at Nashville!"

Her words hurt. "Doesn't it mean anything to you, 'Sabia?"

"How should it? What have I to do with your career? If it will make you bigger, more understanding, kindle your spirit, I should be glad. But I see no signs of that."

"But, 'Sabia," he pleaded, his face darkening,

"can't you see that it takes heart, and spirit, too, to do what I'm doing, go where I'm going? You used to encourage my ambition; do you want me, now, to renounce it and become a country bumpkin?"

She shook her head, not trusting herself to speak. She knew, better than he, that she could not follow him, in homespun or calico best, her hands coarsened by hard work and her feet trained only for barn dances, into that world in which he was making his mark. "But, oh," she thought, "I might have been a fit mate for him if I had been able to go away and mix with the folks in the cities and learn their smart ways!" Well, she might at least be gallant in her disappointment:

"I could never help teasing you, Sam!" she smiled at him. "Of course I'm glad and proud of what you're doing, what you're going to do and be. I'm proud to think that I had a little to do with it, in the beginning, when you were only dreaming of such great matters."

He checked her with an angry, "Ah, only that now!"

"Sam," she carried on determinedly, "I'm fond of you, as I've always been, and I like to think you're fond of me. So go back to your triumphs at Nashville, and remember that your boyhood sweetheart is happy to hear of them. Let's not quarrel because life has separated us!"

She sent him off, saying that much work was waiting for her hands. It was hard to keep back the tears

when he kissed the roughened palms she held out to him.

His two years as governor of Florida ended, Jackson returned to Nashville to find Sam pushing steadily upward, doing a fine law business and establishing himself firmly in the political and social life of the state capital. His friends were the leaders; the doors of the best houses in Market and Water streets were open to him; and in the tavern bars there was always a circle of intent listeners about him.

"Sam's ripening well," said Jackson, putting his powerful influence behind his protégé. "He gets along with all kinds of men—plain, rough, rich, elegant—and the women like him. He'll do!"

Jackson saw him, mounted on the finest horse he could buy, distinguished in smart uniform, reviewing the militia division he commanded, and later mixing with the pretty women, deprecating their compliments laughingly, yet glowing under them. One girl, more daring than the others, had whispered loudly as he passed, "He's like a tall fair god with that halo of brown hair and those brilliant eyes!" Overhearing the tributes, Sam had turned his head and smiled. "The scamp has vanity," Jackson chuckled, "but it's human, and he's not spoiled by it."

A few days afterward, Jackson said to him seriously: "Sam, you've climbed fast, but I think you're well rooted—you're thirty, ain't you? I was forty when they made me major general of militia, and

you've had the position eighteen months already; we dance to swifter tunes these days! I want you to go to Congress. Offer yourself as a candidate in this district, I'll rally my friends and—well, we'll see——"

Washington! Congress! The words thrilled Sam. If Jackson backed him, he was certain to win. Eight years had passed since the battle of New Orleans, but Old Hickory's fame and power had increased rather than diminished. The East scorned him, but the new over-the-Alleghenies west, grown mighty in numbers and vigorous as a field of corn after summer rains, loved him. The West resented more and more the political domination of the Atlantic States, hated Eastern manners and ideas which were imported from London. The West begged to be freed from Europe, its clothes, its accents, the swelling flood of immigrants pouring in from its stale lands.

Sam was in complete harmony with this new spirit of independence, based his campaign on it, shaped the issues that were to serve him through two congressional terms and long afterward: Americanism, Jacksonian Democracy, restriction of immigration, extension of free soil westward, and justice for the Indians. He had not forgotten his friends the Cherokees, and now at last he might be able to help them.

Jackson approved his issues and his speeches, backed him with enthusiasm. He was elected by a gratifying majority, and set off for Washington cheered by all of Nashville that mattered.

Chapter VI

SAM went to Washington with the prestige of Jackson's whole-hearted support, with the record of a brilliant beginning in politics, and with an inevitable self-assurance. Everything he had tried for he had won, including a gracious manner in society, a personal poise and a dignity that made him a distinguished-appearing figure. Men liked or hated him almost at once. Women were attracted not only by his great vitality and magnetism, but as much perhaps by the legend that he was immune from their charms; they could flatter his vanity, but could not touch his heart. Such, at least, was the conclusion of those hopeful mothers of pretty daughters whose designs came to nothing. Gallant to all, devoted to none, he chose with discretion the limited number of Capital entertainments he attended. His vision was firmly fixed upon something more substantial than social success.

In the House, his power as a speaker was soon recognized. He was eloquent in the cause of his Cherokee friends, threw himself into the fight for their rights with ardour and a knowledge of the facts that flattened the windy swellings of his opponents. He touched to life these facts and reasoned arguments

with flashes of fiery oratory. At his back stood the small but powerful New England delegation, as well as his own Tennessee colleagues who, long since freed from Indian contacts, were willing to champion the cause of the under dogs against the ruling Whigs.

His personal efforts with President Monroe and Calhoun, still Secretary of War, were fruitful. With their help, he was able to block for a time Georgia's strenuous demand for the removal of the Cherokees to Arkansas.

Back in Nashville, wearing his honours modestly, he was chosen as one of the small party of distinguished citizens to go down the Cumberland River and escort Lafayette into Tennessee when the aged Frenchman revisited the land he had helped to save. He was with the party on its pilgrimage to Jackson's Hermitage; and at the great banquet offered to Lafayette by the city of Nashville, he was seated near him, proposing the toast:

"Tennessee's gratitude to Our Guest; founded in affection, it will survive the mutations of time and run like a thread of gold through the fabric of our state's democracy."

Again, in that same year of 1825, he assisted in Nashville's welcome to Henry Clay, naming him to the two hundred enthusiastic diners at the Inn the "illustrious son of a magnificent Commonwealth, able statesman, incorruptible patriot, frank, fearless, and devoted undeviatingly to his country."

In the recesses of Congress, he worked hard at his

law practice, which was becoming large, extended his acquaintance throughout the state, and made firmer the foundations of his political career. Serious, intent upon a goal, he provoked the admiring comment of a friend, "Sam does more work in a week than we get through in a month, and yet seems to have more leisure for amusement than any of us!"

Then came the inevitable duel! A strangely involved affair it was, yet in the end it added to his prestige.

The thing originated in a political row. Colonel Irwin had been removed as postmaster at Nashville, and in his excessive heat blamed Sam for his dismissal. Sam should be removed from the scene through the accepted method of the duel, but not by the colonel, who was neither a good shot nor fond of putting his life in peril. He had a friend, however, a rampaging fire-eater who had earned the title of "Bloody" Smith, but insisted oddly upon signing himself John Smith T. A savage, half-mad, eccentric, Smith was known to have killed slaves in his rages, and had been obliged to leave Tennessee for the wilder territory of Missouri. In the duels he had fought, his reputation as a dead shot was established; he was said to have burst into tears of mortification on one occasion when his bullet missed his victim's right eye by the eighth of an inch!

Colonel Irwin sent for Smith, who arrived in Nashville with his case of duelling pistols and little else.

On the streets and in the taverns, he announced himself as Irwin's second, but cried out provocatively, "If that upstart Houston don't guard his tongue, he'll have to fight me!"

Smith's arrival put Sam on notice, and on his appearances in the street and other public places he was accompanied by his close militia friends, stout Colonel MacGregor at their head. Incidentally, he armed himself with a dagger for emergency use.

Irwin's challenge came to Sam as he stood on the veranda of the Inn with his friends; Smith mounted the steps belligerently, extended the paper, and said loudly, "I have a communication here for General Houston from my friend Colonel Irwin." He was halted abruptly by MacGregor, who stepped forward and said, "I am acting for General Houston, Sir, but I can receive no communication from *your* hand!" Smith caught the meaning of the sudden forward movement of the group, let the challenge fall from his hand, bowed, and turned away.

The incident struck two younger members of Sam's guard as comic, and they laughed, whereupon General White, standing near enough to observe Smith's rebuff, stepped forward with the remark, "I do not consider, Sir, that Colonel Smith has been treated with proper courtesy."

To that suave rebuke blunt MacGregor retorted, " 'Colonel' Smith, hell! The fellow's a cutthroat; no self-respecting man could meet him."

Sam's reply, however, was a bow and the formal

offer, "If you believe, Sir, you have a grievance, I shall be glad to give you any satisfaction you demand." He made the offer the more willingly because General White, in the Creek campaign, had led the troops that betrayed Jackson by ignoring the truce he had made with the hostiles of Hillabee town.

"My second," White turned to MacGregor, "who I trust will be a man to your taste, will wait upon you, Sir."

Sam was neither a bad shot nor an expert; he judged it prudent to spend a good many hours of the few days before the arranged meeting in the woods down by the river practising with the pistol, perfecting the technic of the duel. Standing with his back to a small target nailed to a tree, his weapon lightly clutched and hanging at his side, at a muttered signal he walked five paces, whirled, raised the pistol and fired. He did this over and over, until he could whirl and fire with a single movement, and hit the mark.

News of the impending duel was whispered about amongst the select, men who had thought it a mistake for Tennessee to outlaw such affairs of honour. Jackson heard of it, and said to Sam in approval, "I'm glad you swung it to the General; it's a mistake for a man to meet an inferior, as both Irwin and that unhung Smith scoundrel are."

On a fine afternoon, both parties crossed the border into Kentucky, where the duel was still recognized, supping and sleeping in different inns; and early next morning Sam disabled White while the General's

pistol was still rising to the horizontal. It was a serious wound; for weeks White lay hovering between life and death, emerging at length pale and shaken, an excellent advertisement of the folly of challenging Sam Houston.

Sam's reëlection to Congress was a matter of course. His chief, Jackson, had been beaten by Adams for the Presidency, but the defeat had only served to strengthen him in Democratic Tennessee; and as one of Andy's most ardent and effective supporters, Sam's path was smooth. Not quite without thorns, however, for in the state remained certain powerful families in which the Whig traditions, the flair for English manners and ideas, survived. It hurt to have these socially important critics say that he was becoming arrogant, that his waistcoats were too flamboyant, his beaver too tall and flaring. Sam resented being called a dandy.

There were those, too, who whispered that his wounded shoulder, which had refused to heal, became disagreeably evident at times; but such heartless gossip reacted upon the tattlers, for, as his friends indignantly demanded, "Isn't it the proof of his service to the country? of his uncomplaining suffering? of his heroism?"

None could deny his good looks. Six-foot-three, filled out to a hundred and ninety-five pounds, his carefully brushed-back hair setting off the grimly smiling face, his questing gray eyes brilliant with life,

he swung an exaggeratedly long gold-headed cane as he walked the streets with all the pride of a Roman lictor. He posed to a Washington artist in a Roman toga, yielding his own preference for being depicted as an Indian chief to the lady's classical taste. For small gatherings of his friends, he liked to put on the Cherokee deerskin, bright woolen hunting shirt and blanket, sing tribal songs and recite fascinating old Indian legends. Posting away from Washington over the week-ends, he began to mix with the eager, restless society of Baltimore and Richmond, its gay hunting set, aristocratic, pleasure-loving and sophisticated, who thought him eccentric and found him genuinely amusing. Now and then, he pushed on to New York, finding there a lively interest in Western politics and trade possibilities in "the wilderness."

On one of these visits, he met Mr. Van Buren, already casting an ambitious eye on the White House, and was surprised to have him say, "I understand General Jackson means to make you the next governor of Tennessee, if you will accept the nomination?"

It was news to Sam, but he merely smiled and protested that as yet he was not at liberty to discuss the matter. Van Buren nodded and, looking at him speculatively, said, "If you choose, my young friend, you will go far!" and presently, as though impelled by his own known convictions to advise this magnetic disciple of Jackson, "With your brains and good looks, you are well equipped, but keep clear of the women!"

"You don't believe in driving in double harness, Sir?"

"I do not," said the confirmed bachelor, and repeated, "keep clear of the petticoats if you value your peace of mind."

When Sam next saw Jackson, he spoke of the New Yorker's query. "Of course," said Old Hickory, "I want you as governor, though I didn't imagine Van Buren would remember my chance remark. What's more, Sam, if I'm elected President in '20, and I believe I will be, you must go to the Senate. We'll have our hands full with the blasted Whigs, and I'll want your help in downing them."

The talk of Sam as the party's candidate for governor ran about the state, encouraged by Jackson and his friends. It detracted nothing from his popularity. He seemed to be riding the crest of a wave that might carry him as far as he wanted to go. His law office became one of the busiest; men eager for political spoils swarmed around him; fresh doors were opened to the candidate of whom Jackson said, "He has the brightest future of any man I know."

It was at an Inn dance that Sam first saw Eliza Allen, débutante daughter of an aristocratic Whig planter of Gallatin. She was seventeen, slight, supple as the stalk of a Cherokee rose, delicately coloured as the rose, with golden-brown hair that fluffed lightly above a wide low brow of velvety ivory and eyes of the liquid brown of a fine hunting dog's. She was ex-

quisite in satin gown of faintest rose, with its tight-fitting bodice revealing the virginal curve of her bosom, with bare rounded arms and delicate shoulders; her slender feet, satin shod to match the gown, peeped demurely from under the voluptuous folds of her full-gathered skirt; and around the slim, enticing neck sparkled three rows of crystals. She carried a fan of painted gossamer.

Lovely, fragile, ethereal, she floated into Sam's view, and he said to himself with a thrill of delight, "She's the most exquisite of created beings!" He could scarcely wait for an introduction, but when he asked her to dance his accustomed suavity deserted him, he stammered and flushed. With adorable shyness, she rose, glancing upward as they danced with an occasional fleeting look that shook him as no other woman's gaze had ever done. To his polite query, "Why have I not seen you before?" she answered, in a little breathless rush, "But how could you, this is my first dance in Nashville." It was as though she must hurry her words lest she lose courage to finish a sentence.

An enchanting voice, issuing from lips as delicate and soft and curved as the marking of a butterfly's wing! Sam must sit beside her at supper. Might he? She wasn't sure. Somehow, it was arranged. He forgot to eat, gazing at her dazedly, sat stupidly silent under the spell of her fascination, thinking, "How delicate, how incredibly young and untouched and fair she is!" When her mother came to take her away,

he bent before her as though she were a queen and he offering homage.

Mrs. Allen had her moment of triumph at seeing Sam Houston the invincible at her daughter's feet. She asked him to the Gallatin plantation for the quail shooting, regretted that they had not known him before; and Sam begged that out of her gracious charity she would name an early day for his visit. Smiling at his ardour, she said, "Perhaps you will be good enough to accompany Mr. Allen home from Nashville next Saturday?"

Everyone soon knew of Sam's infatuation, for he went only where Eliza was to be found; and at every opportunity he took the road to Gallatin. With all the world, John Allen approved his daughter's suitor; he was no Democrat, but he respected the power and integrity of Jackson, and he knew that Sam was destined for a high place as a leader of his party. Stories of his occasional drinking bouts, Homeric carouses in the company of stout fellows like MacGregor, Stephenson, Grundy, and Catron, did not trouble Allen; such outbreaks were in the tradition. "Eliza," he said to his wife, "could hardly do better for herself."

Mrs. Allen thought so, too, and added, "I'll be only too glad if it breaks up her silly, schoolgirl affair with young Elmore Douglas, who will never be anything more than a poor doctor—if he achieves that!"

"Do you think she cares for Houston?" he asked.

"Not yet, but there'll be time enough for that after

they're married. Eliza's too young really to know the meaning of love; and she's a dutiful child."

Sam made love with the same absorbing energy and enthusiasm he had carried into soldiering and politics. His first confusion conquered, he became a confident wooer. He had never failed to get what he wanted, and now, the long-dormant emotional deeps of his nature thoroughly stirred, he could not imagine failure. More now to him than the winning of the governorship was the winning of his sweet Eliza's consent to be his wife! To rule his heart, and grace the governor's mansion! A vision and a hope more delectable than any wine of the gods ever craved by mortals.

In his campaigning, he went to speak at Gallatin, and Eliza attended the meeting with her parents. Colonel Guild, a neighbour, presided, introducing Sam briefly:

"General Houston, as you know, is the Democratic champion in this joint debate, a whole-hog Jackson man. He will speak first, and Mr. Baldwin, a staunch Whig, will follow."

On a small table in front of Colonel Guild and between the speakers was a large pitcher and two tin cups. Rising, Sam poured some of the brown-hued liquid in the pitcher into each cup, courteously offering one to his opponent and drinking the other. Then he plunged into his speech, eloquent, dramatic, seeking words golden and enchanting enough for his Eliza's ears. From time to time, he drank, always

pressing upon Mr. Baldwin the other filled cup. The day was warm, but Sam seemed not at all affected by his efforts; his hearers followed him with absorbed intentness—even Mr. Baldwin, whose gaze seemed strangely fixed. With the conclusion of his two-hour speech, the pitcher was tilted, emptied, and he sat down to the sound of cheers.

Colonel Guild moved to the table and began, "I do not need to introduce Mr. Baldwin to this assembly," when the Whig champion slid gently off his chair and rolled upon the floor.

"You sure don't!" roared a loud-voiced farmer above the laughter of the crowd. "You'd better put him to bed."

Another roar of laughter, then Colonel Guild gravely dismissed the audience. Eliza was shocked, frightened a little at Mr. Baldwin's collapse, until her father, laughing, said: "Don't worry, child; he's drunk, that's all! That pitcher he helped to empty held brandy toddy."

Sam came to the Allens' for supper, none the worse for his share of the drink. Eliza overheard her father's laughing tribute to the guest, "It takes a strong man, Houston, to match drinks with you!" She wondered that men could enjoy such coarse humour; her Elmore detested even the odour of strong liquor.

Later in the evening, however, she consented to sing for Sam—before the invited guests had all arrived and the drawing-room had been cleared for

dancing. He leaned over the piano, his eyes bent with a look of passionate adoration upon her flushed face. She caught his glance, faltered in her song. "You frighten me," she whispered.

"Ah, no, 'tis you who frighten me, Eliza! You hold my heart in those two dear little hands, to break or not as you will. Eliza——"

"Hush! Not here, not now, with this roomful of people," she protested, flushing.

"Of course! I had forgotten," he muttered, glancing darkly about, "that others were here. No one else exists for me when you——" He broke off to smile at her mother, who dragged him away to meet arriving guests. As they went, Mrs. Allen whispered, "Don't be so frighteningly serious, General! She—I don't think your case is hopeless." She gave him a secret, encouraging smile.

He was elected governor by another record-making vote—a glorious day for the Democrats! Bonfires at the crossroads, tavern celebrations, a great torchlight procession through the streets of Nashville, the flickering flames showing Sam bowing from a splendid horse, closely followed by the city's aristocracy in carriages and the multitude on foot. All but the footgoers pushed on to the Hermitage, where Sam dismounted to stand beside Jackson as the great man spoke his praises. More cheers, then back to the great ball that lasted through the night.

For the first time, that evening Sam dared to ask

Eliza to be his wife; and she, caught for the moment in the general enthusiasm, urged too by the wishes of her parents, consented. But her word was given with troubled eyes, hesitantly, and she shrank from his arms and the ardent kiss of the lover.

He was hurt, but stammered, "I—I'm too eager—too rough with you, my sweet. But—ah, I do love you so, Eliza. All of this—this shouting to-day, it means nothing without you. You hold my life in your keeping now, my dear one; I am at your feet. With you at my side," he had recovered his speech, "there is nothing I cannot achieve, no honour, no position. For you I will win wealth, for your sweet sake I will strive as no man has ever done before!"

She was confused, answered breathlessly, "I hope I shall not disappoint you." Nothing more, and she hurried away to think of what she had promised, for young Douglas's latest letter, pressed into her hand but a moment before she started for the ball by her maid, lay against her heart. Would she, could she fulfil the promise she had made to that rather overpowering, awesome man who was so soon to be governor of Tennessee? Could she forget the humble, lovable young Douglas?

Her word, her timid "I hope I shall not disappoint you" were enough to send Sam into raptures. Disappoint him? She, the loveliest, sweetest, fairest of her sex—why, if she would but sit beside him, like some queen of high romance, and fling him a smile, one smile, each day, he would be content. All the

latent ardour and chivalry of the man flowered in a worship of her delicacy. Literally, he would have knelt, felt an exquisite ecstasy at the touch of her cool hands on his head, kissed with burning lips her slender feet. Something of this he tried to say before she drove away, but she broke from him when he seized her hands and pressed them ardently to his lips, left him murmuring rather brokenly, "Eliza, I —is it that I love you too much?"

In her room, she lay weeping, pressing her hands to her eyes that could see only the mournful young face of Douglas. To her mother's questioning, she offered first a calm statement of the engagement, then suddenly, desperately, she begged: "Mother, take me away! I'm afraid of him. He's old, and he frightens me. I can't love him, I can't—ever!"

"Old, my child?" Mrs. Allen rebuked. "He's not yet thirty-four! And you'll find that after marriage you'll cease to fear, and learn to love him. Believe me, my love! Your father and I are delighted."

Chapter VII

SAM would have had the wedding at once, before his inauguration; the thought of Eliza beside him in the parade, presiding at Mansion dinners, hostess at the governor's ball, her fragrant youth, the slender body he so passionately loved, close to him, supporting him in the stormy days of his office, learning his moods, fairly obsessed him. But she resisted, pleaded her youth, would not allow the engagement to be announced, threatening to break it off when her mother stormed, carrying her point with flooding tears.

"She is really too young, Sam," said Mrs. Allen, reluctantly yielding to Eliza, "to meet the responsibilities of married life."

"Of course," he said, touched by the girl's maidenly hesitation. "It's hard for me to remember that I am twice her age. If I haven't yet learned to be patient, I must do so now; I'm willing to wait until she is ready, but I do hope"—his voice betrayed the inner tumult of desire that surged beneath the controlled surface—"you will be kind to me and persuade Eliza not to keep me too long in this purgatory."

"I will indeed; Eliza could not be in better keeping, General. But you understand that a young girl must be allowed her vagaries," Mrs. Allen smiled at

him, "and after all she will be yours for many years, while her father and I will be living in an empty house!"

He threw himself into the duties of his new office with a zeal all the more intense because of his thwarted desire. It was a task demanding all of his energy and resources; difficult problems, arising inevitably in a young state, challenged his shrewdness, his patience, and his firmness. Communities growing fast in wealth and population clamoured for state aid. His vision had to extend now to every boundary, rather than the city of his adoption and the limits of his congressional district. He had no mind to shirk his responsibilities, however; rather, he welcomed the trial of strength they imposed.

He found time, also, to campaign for Jackson, again the candidate of the Democrats for President, going sometimes far beyond the borders of the state to speak for his beloved leader. He was in the way of becoming himself a nationally known figure, raising in the ranks of his militant party the hope that when Old Hickory had ended his service at the White House, Sam might be the logical successor. Jackson's triumph in the election left him with but the one unfulfilled dream, Eliza as his wife.

More than ever he was the idol of Nashville, the much-sought guest; and though his devotion to Eliza was evident, other young and lovely girls made it plain that they would gladly console him for her coolness and cruelty. They made it plain to her as well,

thus flattering her and gratifying her pride. She was a curious blend of strength and weakness, capable of an extraordinary passive resistance, but incapable of taking the positive step and giving herself to young Douglas against the desires of her parents and the disapproval of her world.

She would not see Douglas, yielding so much to her mother, but received his letters through a friend. Passionate, sorrowful, pleading, touched with the flowery romance of youth, dramatizing his poverty and loneliness, the letters were treasured. "My dear, why will you not consent to fly with me! At your side, my dear sweet, I would storm the heights of success. I would build up, somewhere far from the disapproving frowns of those who are holding us apart, a practice that would insure us a home and a position fit for you. We are both young, and can afford to wait for success, but we should know happiness in even the rudest shack, with only bread and love to share."

Thus Eliza wavered, in her letters tantalizing the youth by half promises to elope, never quite summoning courage to break with Sam. At last, angry and tried beyond endurance, Douglas ceased to write. He had said: "I must warn you that I can bear the suspense no longer. Two years you have tantalized me; now you must come to me or let me go. I live in torment, my work suffers, I am wretched." His angry words hurt, and that evening at a Christmas party given by General Morris at Gallatin, Eliza told Sam she was ready to name the day.

He was rapturous, illuminated by the joy he felt; he must go with her at once to her mother and fix the day, then make a public announcement. Smiling uncertainly, Eliza fell in with his wishes; at once she began fortifying to herself her consent with the recollection of his unswerving devotion, his delicate and untiring attentions, his ready yielding to her whims and wishes. Ah, this big man did know how to flatter and cherish!

She would be envied by many women. The governor's lady! His first term near its end, Sam had been renominated, and his reëlection was certain. He was a bigger figure in the state than ever, climbing steadily toward that pinnacle on which stood his great mentor. She would put Elmore Douglas out of her heart! She turned to Sam with a shyness, a yielding constraint, that enraptured him even more.

"Madam," he could scarcely restrain himself from shouting as he led her to where her mother stood in a group of ladies, "your daughter has just made me the happiest of men by consenting to become my wife in the near future. May we count upon your blessing?"

"This makes me very happy, General! I need not say to my friends here that it is not unexpected news; all the same, I know they will be glad to offer their congratulations to us all." She consummated the public betrothal by taking Eliza's hand and putting it into Sam's.

"We'll have Parson Hume marry us, and half of

Nashville here for the wedding!" Sam promised jubilantly.

There could be no doubt that their world was pleased at the announced engagement; men drank to Sam, called him the luckiest dog in the state; the women fluttered about Eliza with breathless interest and excited comment. She rose during the weeks before the wedding to seem the most important person of the social world that revolved about Nashville. With her mother and her aunts, she spent long hours shopping, and longer hours being fitted for the alluring, lavish items of her trousseau. Party after party was given for the two, to which Sam came in magnificent waistcoats, beaming at the ladies who said fervently, "General, if ever there was a marriage made in heaven it's yours with dear Eliza!" He squired his love with a colossal pride, bent over her hand with a grace and a sincerity of devotion that set her on a pinnacle. They scarcely saw one another alone; Mrs. Allen was not only the perfect chaperon of her strict time, but she feared somewhat the effect of the great man's ardour on her nervously excited daughter.

Eliza was grateful; she had no longing for the caresses, the impulsive embraces, the hot love words of this huge man who would so soon be her husband; he did seem old to her, too old for the extravagances of courtship which, she believed, belonged only to youth. Her mother said that marriage would relieve her fear, change her nervous repulsion to love. Mar-

riage involved a mystery of which she knew nothing definite; she was being hurried into it without any clear idea of what was expected of her. Could it be true that after the revelation she would love this proud, tall, commanding man who called himself her devoted slave, who seemed so confident in his happiness, more than she loved—had loved—Elmore?

Oh, she must believe it! Yet she did not destroy the letters from her young lover, could not bring herself to burn those pages she had read and reread; she kept them locked in a small casket with other treasures of her girlhood, the infinitely sweet reminders of "a day that is done."

Magnificent was the wedding, attended by all of Nashville that mattered to Sam and to the aristocratic Allens. Eliza was exquisite in her dress of white and silver, with the floating veil of precious old lace and tulle. Four of Nashville's loveliest débutantes were her bridesmaids. The drawing-room of her father's house, where they stood together before Parson Hume, was fragrant with the blooms of hothouse flowers, while a powder of snow outside made the background of a traditional New Year's winter landscape.

As he waited for his bride, standing tall and pale and acutely conscious of the drama of the moment beside Colonel MacGregor, his best man, Sam had one of the great thrills of his life. It was as though an angel came slowly toward him, on the arm of

agitated John Allen, to confide to him a holy purity. His heart swelled with an almost intolerable tenderness. In a new rush of humility, he wondered if a lifetime of devotion could make up for this priceless boon of her youth and beauty, her love. His eyes on her bent head, he made the responses in a tone rich, deep, and a bit muffled; hers came in a whisper so light that the parson must lower his head in order to hear them.

The wedding breakfast followed as a joyous consummation. Solemnity vanished; Sam was gay, almost hilarious; extravagant toasts were drunk; into Eliza's eyes came a sparkle of excitement, of warm response to the overflowing hearts of her friends. The last glass tilted, with the company on their feet, Eliza slipped away with her attendants and Sam was hurried into his greatcoat by MacGregor, while the carriage was driven around to the great porticoed entrance by his coachman. Eliza came down the stairs, adorable in a warm violet cape bordered with white fur, her violet bonnet trimmed with a curling white ostrich feather; Sam met her, smiling like a schoolboy, took her arm in his; together, they raced for the carriage under a shower of rice. The cheers of the men and the shrill cries of the women followed them down the winding driveway.

Alone in the big house that evening, John Allen and his wife spoke seriously of their darling's future. "I feel sure that she has done well," he said, and she, "Sam will make a good husband, and"—she looked

across her fan, which she was holding up to screen her face from the fireplace's glow—"he may make her the First Lady of the Land." He nodded, "Yes, it's possible. Do you think she will——" He did not finish that sentence, and his wife said hurriedly, "I'm sure she will be happy with him."

She wasn't too sure; she remembered with some misgiving Eliza's moods—how on entering her room unexpectedly before the ceremony she had found her on the bed sobbing; how she would say nothing in explanation save that she was nervous; how forced and sad a smile she turned upon her mother, saying that it was hard to leave father, mother, and her girlhood for new responsibilities. "Girls are sometimes difficult," she offered rather vaguely.

"I suppose you're right," agreed Mr. Allen, rising to summon a servant. He felt that he needed his nightcap of brandy. "At any rate, she's out of our hands now, my dear."

Chapter VIII

SAM took his bride straight to the governor's mansion, newly renovated in her honour. That was as she wished, and he was glad to omit the traditional honeymoon flight in order to give his attention to the new-year problems raised by the Legislature. She took her place at the head of his establishment with a grace, a shy confidence that enchanted him.

"I—I make frightful blunders, Sam," she said in her hurried way, "but you're so good that you won't scold me!"

"Blunders, dear one?" he laughed. "Impossible!" So deep was his infatuation that he could not conceive of her doing anything that was not perfect, that would not please him. At last, he felt, his feet were firmly set on the road to success. He was young, only thirty-six; without conceit, he could say that no other man in Tennessee save Jackson himself had so strong a hold on the people.

A new dignity and seriousness of manner puzzled and pleased his world; gone was the man of impulse, of reckless tavern gaiety, of occasional rousing nights with stout drinkers, and in his place walked a proud governor, speaking with deliberation, as one who valued his authority. The dinners he gave were dis-

tinguished, his guests carefully chosen; and Eliza made a charming if reserved hostess. Their friends, driving away from the Mansion House, said, "She's more beautiful than ever, wears her lovely gowns with a new air, but—oh, there's a chill something that surrounds her!" The people who saw her only in her carriage said, "How proud the governor's lady is!" Too proud, some said.

Her hauteur charmed Sam; somehow, he thought, it was a tribute to his position; it flattered his vanity. In her aloofness, he saw the patrician gesture. Cool she might be, but always exquisite! He suffered from her unchanging coldness, was cruelly hurt by her failure to respond to his ardour when they were alone, and he wanted to take her in his arms and pour out upon her his lover's fire, but told himself that she would learn in time to give her lips passionately. "She's but a child," he muttered. His life had perhaps been lived too much with men; perhaps he did not understand the intricacies of a lovely woman's heart!

That she did not love him never entered his thoughts, for had she not married him? Was he unworthy of love? He had received too much attention from women, had been too truly loved by Eusabia for him to doubt his power of inspiring love. He could not perceive that Eliza was unhappy, nor understand that her coldness was not the reserve of a young and newly wed woman, but the result of a deep instinct of repulsion.

Not long after his marriage, he spoke at the vast

Vauxhall celebration of Jackson's inauguration as President. He seemed to speak with a new power and gravity, his mind reaching out to the broader issues his cherished leader was facing, finding words that echoed far beyond the boundaries of the state. He was the statesman, the leader. To the quick congratulations of his friends, he answered:

"If I have done well, it's because of my wife! Any new worth you may find in me has been added by her."

From the Vauxhall meeting he set off at once for Knoxville and another Jackson celebration, and from there to campaign in eastern Tennessee. He wrote a note of farewell to Eliza, sending it by a slave: "My sweet, I must not delay a moment longer, but you will know that I am thinking always of you and will not delay my return to your side a moment longer than is necessary. It is hard to leave my darling alone! Thy Sam."

The note came to Eliza from the hand of her black maid. She read it as she lay in bed, stared at the words with a curious smile parting her lips, then cried impulsively, "Thank God, Chrissie!" She laughed bitterly at the slave girl's startled face. "Life is a cruel teacher!"

"Now, Mis' Liza, y'u-all mus'n' say sechlike wicked wo'ds!"

"Life teaches you the truth when it's too late, Chrissie! But now—a respite—yes, go—I shall sleep soundly again."

Sam stopped for a brief time at Maryville to visit his mother before returning to Nashville. She had refused to come to his wedding, pleading her poor health, actually daunted by the thought of facing the grand folks who would be swarming about her brilliant son. She was eager to hear about it, listened intently to Sam's eager talk of Eliza as he sat across the hearth from her while she bent her eyes over her knitting, and prayed silently that half of his extravagant estimate might be true.

"I will bring Eliza to you in the spring, Mother. You must see her, know her loveliness and beauty. Never was a man more greatly blessed than your son!"

"Nor more worthy, Sam!" she looked up proudly. "I don't care how wonderful your wife is, she ought to know that she has a husband in ten thousand!"

Sam laughed, silently, fondly. "Mother, I'm likely to be utterly spoiled amongst the lot of you!" He sat for a time without speaking, his eyes on the radiant hickory logs, and then said very seriously: "I really am frightened sometimes when I think of my luck. Life has given me everything I've asked for, but some day I wonder if the cup may not be snatched away!"

"Don't forget, Son, that you've paid." She rose and came to stand for a moment beside him, her arm across his shoulders and her hand touching the wound that would never heal. "This poor arm, Sam——" She stooped swiftly and kissed the top of his head.

He flushed, stammered quickly, "Yes, dear, but I

hope——" he hated any allusion to the wound now, this stain on his firm, fair flesh, the one ugly weak spot in his strong body, for he had seen Eliza shrink from it, fastidiously careful never to touch the bandage that must always hide it, seeming not to hear his mumbled apologies for it.

Eusabia he saw for a short half hour. She came to him in the fragrant, remembered old sitting room, smiling, gave him a firm hand and a frank, clear look of a friend.

"I was sorry, Sam, that I could not get to Nashville for your inauguration; it's that I'm nurse now to Mother, and have been for two years. We're proud of you! Some day"—she hesitated only a moment, then went on cheerfully—"you'll bring your wife to see me, won't you? I know she's very lovely, very young and lovely, Sam, and I——" Sam thought she sighed. He was right, and she thought, "Oh, I'm old and tired and faded and ugly; I wonder that he came to see me at all!" But she was wrong; he saw a Eusabia tall, supple, her glinting hair like a crown, her lips holding a smile that was sweet and comforting. The perfect friend. Her warmth seemed to melt a chill that had settled upon his heart.

"My dear, I hope—I know you'll like her, Eusabia! And she will like you. In the spring, I've promised Mother to bring Eliza to her. Then—may I say it, 'Sabia?—I shall see together the three women of all the women in the world I love!"

"Ah, Sammie!" How he could hurt! But his cruelty

was unconscious; knowing men as he knew the ten fingers of his hands, knowing as aptly how to use them, his ignorance of women was—oh, pitiful, Eusabia thought, smiling wryly. Well, even this wonderful Sammie, for whom she had dreamed her girlish dreams, for whom she had prayed forthrightly, "God, make him a big man," could not understand everything.

March came, bringing song birds, wild flowers, green pastures, the new blooms in dooryards; Sam noted them in his journeys through the state. Spring. He ought to feel it more keenly. What was wrong?

In the brief halts at Nashville permitted by the campaign schedule his committee had laid out, he found Eliza seemingly more occupied than ever with the cares of the household, and with her social obligations. She seemed tired, but said when he chid her on her pale cheeks and languid air, "It's only the spring!" He had thought that spring must enliven youth, set young blood racing to the tune of the mating birds! How much he did not know!

But she liked his talk of his journeyings, the enthusiastic responses to his speeches; she read with pride the newspaper reports of his triumphs; and always, in the little rushing manner he adored, she made her naïve comments. To the query that he could not help crying sometimes: "Do you love me, my dear? Do you?" she answered, flushing, "Of course, yes, Sam!" In her confusion he read, he could still

read, only delicacy and a wonderful modesty; and he yearned over her all the more.

Vaguely, he was troubled; perhaps his patience was wearing thin? Ah, but he must not be impatient with his Eliza!

A fortunate change in dates on his last campaigning jaunt permitted Sam, by riding late in the evening, to reach home a day earlier than he had planned. He dismounted, turned his horse over to the slave who had accompanied him, looked at his watch. It was not yet ten o'clock; Eliza would not yet be in bed; they would have time for a talk. He let himself in, went quietly upstairs intent upon giving his wife a surprise, smiling as he mounted.

He knocked at the door of their bedroom, then stepped inside. She was seated on the floor, in a lovely loose dressing gown of pale yellow silk, her hair in ringlets falling over her shoulders. An entrancing picture—at first glance. Then Sam saw that she had been weeping. In front of her was a small casket, and in her lap a heap of open letters; other letters were scattered about on the carpet.

A moment she sat motionless, looking up at him, before starting to her feet with a half-stifled cry. She was chalk pale, her tear-stained eyes round and staring and holding such a look of startled, angry repulsion as made him instantly apprehend the truth. It was a look of hate! It was a sudden sword thrust, instinctive and deadly. He strode forward, shaking, white as she.

"What letters are these?" he asked hoarsely.

She did not answer. The look in her eyes changed from hate to terror; how huge he loomed above her! And menacing!

He stooped, picked up a closely written sheet, held it before his eyes. But the letters swam, blurred; with an effort, he steadied himself, read the line at the bottom, "Thine, oh, my beloved, in this world and forever," and the signature, "Elmore!"

Douglas. The young doctor. That weak, sallow stripling that had hung about Eliza, of whom Jane Thomas had once warned Sam, "Don't underestimate the youth as a rival, General, for he's the very pattern of a romantic swain, pale and poor and appealing to the strength of our Eliza!" He had never regarded the fellow as a rival, had not thought of him for months, and now—why, it was as if he had wakened from a blissful dream to find himself facing a nightmare spectre that was reality. Eliza stood before him frozen in an attitude of desperation, still clutching in her little hand the letter she had been reading as he entered.

"Eliza—good God, what does this mean?" he demanded, his words exploding into the silence. "When was this written?" He looked for a date, found none, crushed the sheet in his hand, flung it down, and stepped nearer to her.

Recoiling, she burst into frantic weeping, her crossed arms hiding her face.

He stepped back, said slowly, with a great effort of

will, "You must answer, Eliza; when did this letter reach you?"

"Oh!" her arms came down, and a flash of spirit showed in her wet eyes. "You couldn't think! They were all written before I married you. So long—so long ago!" Her voice became a pitiful wail.

"Still you—you—I found you weeping. Do you love this—this——" He could not find the word to express his hatred and contempt for Douglas.

"I do; I love him still. I have been in hell!" She met his stricken eyes squarely, the pale cheeks drawn into hard, furrowed, shining-wet planes as she went on mercilessly: "I have always loved him. I had no right to marry you; it was wicked of me, cruel to you, but I have neither written to—to Elmore nor seen him nor received a word from him since I have been married. You must believe that!" She was trembling, but her voice had steadied.

Incredible words! There was nothing to say; in a silence that seemed to hold the visible presence of Douglas, Sam's thoughts repeated the futile refrain: "My wife in love with another! My Eliza, my dear, sweet, lovely wife has never loved me." Blind, he had thought her coldness only maidenly shyness, virginal reserve. Blind, and a fool! Fool, fool, fool. From his lips he forced a dry, hard laugh; what a fatuous, sickening idiot he had been!

He left Eliza standing there, closed the door quietly, touched its cool panel softly, as though it were his wife's cheek, then gripped his hands fiercely,

the nails sinking deep into the hard flesh of his palms. His fingers relaxed, and he went down the stairs slumped in an attitude of helpless bewilderment. It seemed an uncountable age since he had tiptoed happily up the familiar treads. He went out into the cool night, to walk and walk—anywhere—down to the Market Street bridge, where the Cumberland went flowing eternally down to the sullen Ohio, to the yellow flood of the Mississippi and on and on to the sea; to the woods beyond, from which came little night noises—how often, in his months with the Cherokees, had he walked at night through the woods, building his dreams of service, imagining that the nearly immobile oaks were listening to the speeches that took form in his mind; then back to the streets, rough and muddy from yesterday's rain. Yesterday? Yes; dawn was coming; the sun rose, and men going early to work passed him and looked at him curiously, for he was hatless, his hair in a wild disorder, and in his eyes a stare of madness.

"It *was* the Governor?" a man nudged his companion.

"Aye, it was Sam—daft or drunk—come along, don't look back and gawk at him!"

When at length he came to the mansion, Eliza was gone; her maid, a look of fright in her eyes, told him that she had ordered the carriage "befo' it got light" and had driven off to her father's home at Gallatin. He nodded, went upstairs to their room, found that she had packed a hamper in evident haste, found

the ashes of Elmore Douglas's letters in the fireplace. He never entered the room again.

Swiftly, rumours adding to the tale, the news that Eliza had gone back to her father's home flew about Nashville. Stern and silent, his face drawn and pale, Sam went on with the business of the state with a difficult concentration. His word to his friends was simply, "Eliza and I have parted." Then came Colonel MacGregor, to say bluntly: "Sam, you must scotch the rumour that loose-mouthed men are spreading!"

"I don't know what it is, Mac. I refuse to listen to gossip."

"They're saying you sent her off because she was unfaithful!"

"That's a damned lie, and any man that utters it will have to deal with me!" Sam said hotly.

He meant it. She was gone out of his life, but he had not ceased to love her, and to the limit of his power he would protect her against the scandal-mongers. With an ardour touching in its simple directness, he wrote a long and somewhat incoherent letter to John Allen—a letter that a year later was to be spread on the record of a public meeting of "sundry respectable residents of Sumner County" who came together to refute the persistent libel that Eliza had ruined her husband's career by her infidelity.

"Sir," his pen stabbed viciously at the paper, "if mortal man dare to charge my wife, or say aught

against her virtue, I would slay him! That I do love Eliza none can doubt. That she is the earthly object dearest to me, God will bear witness. She was cold to me, did not love me—she owns that such is the cause of my unhappiness."

At this moment of deepest dejection, he was re-elected governor. It was nothing to him. The notification committee's congratulatory words could not rouse him from the increasing lethargy, the stupor that had fallen upon him. All the strength of his emotional nature had flowered in the months of his courtship and the weeks of his marriage; withering in a moment, he was left dumb, frightened at the void into which he gazed. The vital affairs of Tennessee, over which he had thought long and worked at with a will, seemed now less than trivial. His friends were shadows, their aims and talk and contrivings no more than straws blowing in the windy night of his despair.

He could think of no one to turn to. Eusabia? No, he would not go to her whining, "My wife doesn't love me!" His mother? He was no longer a boy, to have her kiss a bruised finger and murmur, "There, there, Sammie, now run along, it will be all well tomorrow!" Could she heal the deep wound of his conceit by telling him, as she would, that Eliza was unworthy? That was not true! He began to dread meeting the eyes of men and women he had known for years, began to imagine they jeered at him, at his blind folly in forcing himself upon Eliza. He felt

raw, sore, his wounds exposed, unable to defend himself from the scourging of a world that only a brief time since gave all he asked.

Delusions? Yes, but stronger than any reality he had ever faced. For many dreadful days he strove against the obsession, tried to put out of his mind the impression that he was caught in a relentless current that was sweeping to destruction everything he held dear.

Then came, suddenly, irresistibly, out of the turbid night of despair, a call that seemed sane and friendly. The Cherokees! Why hadn't he thought of them before? John Jolly, now established far out beyond the Mississippi in Arkansas Territory, was his Indian father. He would go to him, live remote from the hurting, complicated, fevered life in the midst of what was called civilization, renounce ambition. He would go at once!

In the calm of a settled purpose, he sat down at his desk in the governor's office and wrote to the president of the state senate his letter of resignation. Sealing it, he summoned a negro and charged him to deliver it the next day.

He made his scanty preparations for flight, leaving some written directions concerning state business, burning private papers, preparing directions for dispersing his household staff. He made a clean ending, sat down, looked at his watch; oddly, the warning of Van Buren, that hardened bachelor, came to him, "Keep clear of the petticoats, my boy!"

The recollection was worth a laugh.

Half an hour later, by the light of smoking torches, he boarded the steamer *Red Rover*. The gangplank was drawn, the paddles revolved. He turned abruptly from the tar-smelling deck, went into the bar, threw his carpetbag and the blanket he had worn aboard draped across his shoulders into a corner, and ordered a bottle of whisky. All night he sat alone, silent, stony, his hat drawn over his eyes, drinking but showing no effects of the raw liquor. Curious eyes watched him, and men nudged one another and whispered, "It's him, the Governor."

They were wrong. Sam Houston, governor of Tennessee for two years and reëlected for another two years, had disappeared. Here was only a man calling himself "Samuels," bound for the Cherokee settlements in the West as a trader. Bound for the Arkansas and John Jolly. Bound for oblivion!

SECTION TWO

ON THE ARKANSAS

Chapter I

A GREAT day had ended, the day that had swept Sam up as in a blaze of glory from a petulant ploughboy to the head of a state, from the butt of his lusty family to a leadership in the party second only to Jackson, from a lonely boyhood in which he sought the solitude of books and the Indian woods to the friendship of more important men in Tennessee than were known to any other, from frugal living and patches to competence and elegance and even luxury. A black, strange and tragic night was to follow.

Time passed to the monotonous thrashing of the boat's paddles—down the Cumberland, then the Ohio, then the Mississippi to the mouth of the Arkansas River, where he changed to the *Southern Queen* for the last stage of the voyage. His mood changed with the change of boats; he was sober again, alert to note the new scene—the crashes of running deer in the brush, the glad whoops of Indian youths, the chirring of crickets at night when the boat was tied up to the bank, the lashing cries of whippoorwills. He could smell the masses of wild white violets growing on the banks, and dogwood blossoms wavered like pale butterflies amongst the trees.

He bled less from that horribly wounded vanity;

he could forget it for a time in studying the first Cherokee settlements that came into view. Thrifty settlements they were, with their gristmills and sawmills, new rail fences and trim log and frame houses, their cattle and horses and hogs. Indians who came down to the boat landings, sometimes with their negro slaves to help carry off their ordered shipments of goods, told him that at Tah-lon-tusky, where the Falls of the Arkansas marked the limit beyond which the throbbing, wood-burning steamboats could not go, Jolly had set up his home and the capital of the self-exiled band. Some of the old men recognized him, and word of his coming outsped the boat; the Chief, only slightly grayer and somewhat fatter than Sam remembered him, with the old broad, slowly breaking smile and squinted eyes, was at the Falls boat landing to meet him. He put out both hands as Sam strode down the gangplank.

"Sam! Sure 'nough. Well, you big man now!"

"My father!" Sam's hands closed on the brown fingers, gripped them hard; a glint of moisture showed in his eyes. "I come to be your son, stay with you, and be Indian. White man no longer! Will you take me?"

"Sure, you stay long time with me, Ka-la-nu." Jolly uttered Sam's old Indian name softly, hesitantly. Then, smiling happily, "You come now to my house."

One of Jolly's slaves carried Sam's bag, following the two as they took the trail eastward from the river over a half mile of alternating woods and rank prairie

grass. As they walked, the Chief explained, "I don' come to meet you with horses, Sam, account the flies; ever' time come May in this country flies get so bad they nearly kill horses, an' they mus' stay in the woods till sundown." Out of the vividly green grass at each step rose the swarming green head pests, darting at their hands and faces, buzzing hungrily. "This place not like that Hiwassee country," Jolly turned his head to look at his companion closely. "Sam, you recollec' the Hiwassee?"

It was his invitation to his friend to explain, if he chose to do so, the reason for his coming. But Sam only said: "My father, I have forgotten Tennessee. It is wiped off the face of the earth for me!"

"Yes. Well," Jolly nodded, and there was no more question of why and how. "My ol' woman, she be mighty glad to see you, Sam. Jennie, she got married good while ago; Ocey, too; both got family, an' live close to each other over yonder in the timber." He gestured toward the tree-clad rolling hills that mounted suavely north of the river.

A beef was killed and dressed out by the Chief's stout log corrals; a negro woman slave served the two men at supper, sitting cross-legged on the floor of the log-walled house with a candle between them for light, with broiled beef tongue and the soft lye hominy called cona-hany; and the Chief spoke of the problems his people were facing.

They were serious. The Indians were being steadily forced out of their homes in Georgia, Tennessee,

and Alabama, Cherokees and Creeks alike, and sent destitute across the long miles to the Arkansas Territory. There, instead of the promised supplies of food, household goods, tools, guns, and ammunition, they were turned away empty-handed by thieving agents who diverted to their own pockets the funds sent by the government at Washington to outfit them.

"My people here," said the Chief, "mus' give these hungry folks all such things, an' we can' hardly spare them. I feed many poor Indians, but all the time more an' more keep on comin', an' what we goin' to do I can' see. Nobody at that Indian Bureau off yonder in Washington pay any attention to what we say. Maybe so," he looked up abruptly and fixed his narrowed eyes on Sam's face, "you could go an' talk with Andrew Jackson?"

Sam shook his head. "My father, I am a broken arrow. At Washington, my words would have no strength."

A long silence, then the Chief rose, put a hand on Sam's shoulder, and looked intently into the deep-lined, harried and twitching face of his friend. "Ka-la-nu," he spoke in the softly liquid Cherokee language, "you are troubled in your heart, and I will not ask anything more of you until you can speak without suffering. You are welcome here for all the days of your life. I think your trouble will pass away with the coming of the suns. Now it is time to go to sleep."

In his blanket in a corner of the room where they

had eaten, Sam lay long awake, listening to the pleasant music of the wind in the young oak leaves, thinking, "Here I have found what I sought, unquestioning friendship, understanding." But not all he sought! Not peace of mind, yet; a twinge of pain in his shoulder recalled with a fierce rush of misery Eliza's involuntary shrinking from that eternally bandaged wound; and he groaned, beating the puncheon floor with his fist, choking back the curse that leapt to his lips.

Dressed in the red-fringed long hunting shirt, with its broad stripes of red and blue on a brown ground, woven for him by Jolly's wife, the breech clout, the blue woollen leggins reaching from bare knee to moccasined foot and the blue-and-white head cloth twisted turban-wise about his untrimmed hair, Sam tried to fit himself into the life of the tribe. He hoped to rid himself of the aching bitterness that was corroding heart and mind by casting away the trappings of white civilization, to be Indian in spirit as well as clothes.

A futile hope! There was so little that he could do, and he required strenuous action. Farming and cattle raising? They had never interested him. The hunting season was months away. To a life crowded with work that called out everything he possessed of energy and resourcefulness succeeded endless leisure. He joined in the protracted talks of Jolly and his counsellors, proud of their confidence and

their firm friendship, but the inner fire of despair was not quenched. With the ending of the plague of flies, he began to range far on horseback, eastward along the Arkansas River to visit the first settled colonies of exiles, westward to the limit of the Cherokee lands and the Osage hunting grounds. He stayed with the traders Glenn and Pryor, watching their trafficking with farmers, hunters, guides, scouts, packers, horse thieves, amongst the motley border Indians, for in his mind was the thought that he too might open a store.

At Cantonment Gibson, he swapped stories of the Creek campaign with the officers, ate with them, and drank the most reckless of the youngsters under the table. In disgust with himself, he rode north to find the Frenchman Chouteau, whose trading post and almost princely private establishment at Salt Springs had become a widely known port of call for western adventurers.

Gray-grizzled, stout, spirited, wise, ironic, with eyes that were at once mocking and kind, Chouteau was a man to Sam's liking; his good-looking Osage Indian mistress, managing the vast household with a smooth efficiency, was a gay and popular hostess. He stayed a week, and in talks late at night, when the trader was not occupied with the crowding details of his extensive business, found that Chouteau knew more about the intricate and threatening situation amongst the Osage, Pawnee, and other plains Indians of whom the Cherokees and Creeks were

complaining than all the agents and soldiers the government had sent out.

Chouteau was a practical philosopher. "My friend," he fixed Sam with a dancing eye, "it will disappear, zis long trouble between ze white man and ze Indian, only when zey lie down together—I mean, of course, when ze white man lie down wiz ze Indian woman, as you see I have done!" His laughter was quickly succeeded by a mood of sombre criticism: "Zis government which honour me by making me American citizen deals stupidly wiz zese people, sending agents who are not honest, who do not like ze Indians. Words do not mean anyzing to zese agents, while ze Indians listen very careful to what he say and expect him to carry out his promise. Me, I have never promise somezing I cannot do, and I never fail to do wiz ze Indians exactly what I have said.

"But you know all zat, you have lived wiz zem! Perhaps if you and I can go for ze government and hold council wiz all ze wild fellows who raid ze Cherokees and ze Creeks and make more and more difficult ze voyaging of white men to ze west, zey will listen. Me, I would go, but only if I have ze government guarantee zat what I say will be done. But——" he shrugged.

"Worthless!" Sam agreed. "I've never heard of a government promise to the Indians that was carried out when the whites wanted it broken. Things are in a mess here, and getting worse." The two men

talked that night almost till dawn, and Sam went to bed for the first time in months thinking more of others' misery than of his own.

It was a brief respite, however; his mood of bitter self-scorn returned, and he sought relief in drink. The occasional sprees with the officers at Gibson were not enough; he smuggled whisky into his room at Jolly's, and drank himself into crazy hilarity, to be followed by long hours of stupor. The Indians, coming in a ceaseless flow to consult their chief, saw him reeling about under the oaks or lying in a coma in their shade, and dubbed him "Big Drunk!"

One midday, recovering from a lone debauch, he sat eating out of doors with a chattering group, when a slave, dressed by one of the young Indian men in exact imitation of Sam, was made to stand behind him and ape his every fumbling gesture. At the first burst of laughter, Sam turned to confront the black caricature of himself. Sam swore at him and shook his fist; compelled by the Indian, the slave swore and shook *his* fist. The company roared with delight. Gripping himself with a mighty effort of self-control, Sam grinned round at the company and went on eating as if nothing had happened. Still laughing, Jolly sent the slave off, clapped Sam on the back, and cried: "Good! You don' get mad at a joke on you."

The jest stung him, however—as Jolly intended that it should—revealing to himself the state of phy-

sical degradation into which he had fallen. He must pull up.

He did, calling upon the deep reserve of self-control that he believed exhausted. He spilled the store of whisky cached under his blankets, and set out to gather and formulate in a long letter to the Secretary of War the details of the miserable situation of the Cherokees and Creeks and the menace of the roving plains Indians. His facts he checked in conference with Jolly, the Creek leaders, Chouteau, and Pryor and Glenn; he ended by suggesting a peace mission on which he and Chouteau were prepared to serve.

He received no reply; his letter never even got beyond the underlings of the Department, who had heard of his flight from Tennessee and regarded him merely as a hopeless derelict whose words could carry no weight now.

Their implied contempt stirred Sam to a flaming anger; he would show them whether or not they could ignore him!

At a council of the tribe, he was formally adopted; he received from the grave chief a solemn document declaring him a Cherokee, granting to him "forever all of the rights, privileges, and immunities of a citizen of the Cherokee Nation." It was a gesture that appealed to his sense of drama, and moved him greatly; coming to him entirely unexpected, he could only rise and with an outward fling of his arms cry fervently: "I thank you, my brothers! Long ago,

One said, 'I was hungry and ye fed me, I was a stranger and ye took me in,' and I——" He thought of the vow given by Ruth, "Thy people shall be my people——" and he glowed with the purpose to dedicate himself to their service.

At his request, Eliza had divorced him; and now that he might be as fully one in flesh and purpose with the Cherokee as a white man could be, he married Talahina, the mission-educated daughter of an Indian mother and an English-born American who had served as an officer of the Cherokee auxiliary troops under Jackson in the Creek War. Tall, handsome, tinted a rich red-brown, deep-bosomed, she gave Sam affection, devotion, met his varying moods with serenity, was patient with him when he was tempted to drink and proud of him when sober. Skilled in cooking, spinning, gardening, all of the Indian domestic arts learned from her mother, she kept the cabin he had built almost in the shadow of the military post in immaculate order.

Sam could not have for Talahina the romantic love he had given Eliza; that well was dried up in him. He gave her real affection, however, and the respect her loyalty and intelligence deserved; he found comfort in her tenderness, relief from the sense of intolerable loneliness. " 'Hina," he said, meeting the brave, merry eyes of his wife with the deep, serious gaze she had learned to know so well after six months of marriage, "you're good medicine for me! Did you know it?"

"I am glad you say that, Sam; always I am thinking what I can do that is best for you." With a laugh, she yielded her full lips, her strong, vital body to his embrace, and a rich flood of colour darkened still further her dusky cheeks. She was a challenge to his manhood.

He must justify her faith in him, and the faith of John Jolly and those councillors who had deemed him worthy of being adopted into the tribe. In his pocket was a worn letter from the President of the United States containing words of blunt sympathy for his domestic crash, and telling of his own sorrow at losing by death his beloved wife Betty only a few days before entering the White House. The letter reminded him now of Jackson's loyalty; and when it became evident that his complaints to the War Department would receive no notice, he decided to go directly to Old Hickory with the problems of the Indians. Jolly promptly appointed two headmen to accompany him to Washington.

Jackson listened, weighed the evidence Sam had collected against the agents, and with characteristic promptness dismissed four of the worst and the head of the Indian Bureau at Washington. Sam sent his Indian companions home with the good news and a letter to "dear 'Hina" explaining that he would be detained some while longer on other Indian business, but "I will hasten home to our 'wigwam' at the earliest possible date!" He signed, "Thy Sam," as he had always done in letters to those he loved.

The expected storm of protest raised by friends of the ousted officials broke, in Congress and out; and Sam met it with all the vigour of the old days when he was fighting his way up in Tennessee. Clad in his picturesque Cherokee dress, the old aggressive fire again showing on his thin face, he spoke to thrilled audiences in the Capital, in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, and the yaups of his enemies who called him renegade squawman, vagabond, scoundrel, and self-advertiser and accused him of trying to line his pockets by pretending to serve the Indians, were forgotten in the tumult of enthusiasm aroused by his passionate pleading. Men and women who came out of curiosity to see the man who had renounced a governorship because of a broken heart and put on "savage" trappings remained to cheer a true hero of romance striving sincerely and almost single-handed against the rapacious oppressors of the weak and helpless. A real knight-errant, he seemed.

Unfortunately, the people who crowded to hear him had little influence with a Congress hostile to Jackson. He was foiled in his plan to secure the contract for rationing the migrating Cherokees and Creeks, in spite of all Old Hickory could do to put it in his hands. He turned back at length toward Talahina and the cabin he had facetiously named "The Wigwam" with the purpose of setting up as a trader, with the words of John Howard Payne, passionate champion of the Cherokee, tolling through his brain:

"Though vespers be kind her sweet dews in bestowing,
No life-giving brook in its shadow is flowing,
And when the chill winds of the desert are blowing,
So droops the transplanted and lone Cherokee!"

On his way back, he stopped in Nashville, to be received by his old friends with a pleasure and affection that greatly touched him. At MacGregor's invitation, his oldest and most loyal supporters gathered at the Inn for dinner. Sam was called upon for a speech in celebration of the anniversary of Jackson's inauguration, and his words were reported in the newspapers with flattering display.

"Stay here, Sam," MacGregor urged, "and remake your career. Don't throw your life away; we need you."

But he would not be persuaded. Nashville held too many echoes of the past, was too literally a graveyard of his youth and happiness to permit him to breathe its air freely. He wanted only to get away; and when he had arranged with a Nashville merchant for the shipment of a stock of goods for the store he meant to open in "The Wigwam," he departed for the Arkansas.

Chapter II

DRAMATIC and stirring as Sam's invasion of Washington had been, its effects were soon nullified by a Congress struggling grimly against Jackson's attempted domination. The men dismissed by the President were reinstated, and Sam's recommendations for the improvement of the Indian service were ignored. Further, he was accused of a desire to profit through his connection with the Cherokees; the matter of the rationing contract was repeatedly raised in Congress, and Jackson's backing was cited as proof of Old Hickory's corruptibility.

He raged in vain. His letters remained unacknowledged; he was ignored, or insulted in passing references by orators working themselves into a frenzy against Jackson. The country seemed to be utterly uninterested in the rights or wrongs of the Indians; only the handful of New Englanders in Congress and a scattering of what the practical politicians called visionaries cared to listen to pleas for just dealing with them.

A sense of failure darkened his days. He fell into moods of deep depression, and again sought relief in drink. He paid little attention to storekeeping. The great, morose, slouched figure riding restlessly

and aimlessly about the country began to be avoided even by the Indians; and the military commander at Gibson wrote to Washington that Sam Houston had lost all self-control, was drinking himself to death, and appeared to be crazed by the controversies in which he had become involved.

John Jolly, however, never faltered in his friendship; like Talahina, he strove unweariedly to divert him from the excesses that were befuddling his brain. Even when, in a moment of drunken fury, Sam struck his beloved Indian father, Jolly picked himself up, rubbed a bruised jaw ruefully, and helped to put him to bed. Sober again, and contrite, Sam recovered something of his manhood. He attempted, at his wife's urging, to break up enough raw prairie land for a garden and small farm; but he soon gave that up with the brief comment: "I'm no more fit for a farmer than for a trader, 'Hina. God knows what I *am* good for!" But he curbed his drinking.

In the third year of Jackson's term, Jolly persuaded Sam to head another Cherokee delegation to Washington in the effort to secure relief from the intolerable oppression of the agents.

Soon after his arrival in the Capital, a congressman from Ohio, one of the pack that was howling against Jackson and that had thwarted all of Sam's proposals, rose and asked the old question of his fellow members in the House:

"Is it true that the President attempted, in despite

of the head of the Indian Bureau, who was removed on trumped-up charges, to give Houston a valuable contract for supplying Indian rations?"

Though Jackson paid no attention to the Honourable Gentleman's insinuation, Sam was furious. By the hand of a friend, he sent a letter to the Ohio congressman, asking if he had intended to impute fraud to himself, and demanding an apology.

The congressman's sole comment was a slightly raised eyebrow and the insolent query, "Who the devil is Sam Houston that I should consider his demands?"

Sam stood a moment in grim silence when his friend repeated the Honourable Gentleman's remarks, then said very softly, "I shall endeavour, none the less, to gain his attention."

There was peril for the Ohio man in those quiet words, and the congressman's friends warned him. He armed himself with a pistol, and let it be known that he was prepared to use it. On his part, Sam borrowed a stout hickory cane—one he had presented to its owner years before—and walked the streets diligently until he encountered the other. Then with the words, "I'm Sam Houston," he struck the man, who pulled his pistol and snapped it point-blank at Sam's heart. It missed fire, and Sam, rushing in, knocked it out of his hand and thrashed him, with his one sound arm and the cane, until he was dragged off.

From his bed next day the victim sent a demand to the Speaker of the House that Sam should be

arrested and as an ex-member brought before the bar of that body for trial. Congressmen saw in the demand an oblique thrust at the President, and it was hotly debated. The anti-Jackson men won, and the writ went out.

Here was action! Sam welcomed with eagerness the opportunity not only to defend his beloved patron but also to show that his own sun had not set. "It's my chance to lift my head again among men! If the fool had been content to have me hauled up before a police court for brawling, he'd have killed me politically forever and forever. Instead, he's given me the highest platform in the land to speak from."

As counsel, he engaged Francis Scott Key, later known as "Star-Spangled Banner" Key, who battled valiantly and eloquently, opposing to the denunciations of Sam's brutal assault on a member of the House for using his privilege of free speech in debate the plea that ever since the battle of Horseshoe Bend, where he was desperately wounded in the service of his country, one of Sam's arms had been all but useless. Back and forth the conflict raged. Sam sat in silence for three weeks listening to the raging of anti-Jackson members and the fervid defence of Old Hickory's supporters, absorbing with grim smiles the glancing sneers at himself as a "savage" in heart as well as dress. During that time, under the fierce bludgeoning, he recovered his old poise. His mind cleared; he became alert to the intricacies of the game that was being played, storing in his re-

markable memory every point he meant to touch upon in his own speech at the end of the trial.

As that day neared, he received from President Jackson a laconic line asking him to come to the White House. "Sam," his old leader said as he shook his hand warmly, "you may have thought I was a poor friend, leaving you to fight the wolves alone. But I've been keeping an eye on the trial. It's not you they're after; it's me they want to drag down."

"I know that, Sir; and, God helping me, I'll make that clear to the country when I speak."

Jackson studied him briefly, then: "That Indian rig won't do when you speak, Sam. They're calling you a barbarian. When you get up, you should be dressed as an American gentleman."

"Unfortunately, Sir," Sam's face was twisted in a wry smile, "I haven't a penny to spend for clothes!"

"Yet they accuse you of making a fortune out of the Indians! Sam, those infernal scoundrels don't know an honest man when they meet one!" Jackson laughed, took from a drawer of his desk a purse, and handed it over. "Here's money; get what you need. Remember, you'll be spending it for me! I'll give you a note to my own tailor."

On the afternoon of the day before he was to speak the new clothes were brought to Sam. That night, in his hotel room, he held a conference with four staunch Jackson men: Stephenson, the Speaker of the House; Senator Grundy, James Knox Polk, and Bailey Peyton of Tennessee. Together, they

went over the points to be made in the speech, the effective arguments. Afterward they sat on, drinking heavily, all save Polk, who helped Sam to put the others into carriages.

"How in the world," Polk asked, "can you carry your liquor so easily? You've drunk more than any of them."

"Nothing could affect me," Sam said with grim seriousness, "facing what is ahead of me to-morrow! Polk, I've been in hell for nearly three years, and here's my chance to rise out of it and be a man once more. By God, Sir, I'm going to make the most of it!"

Next day as the session was called to order, Sam entered with the deliberate dignity he had learned to use in Tennessee, paused a moment to note the crowded galleries. His tall, heavy figure was magnificently set off by the long blue broadcloth coat, the perfectly fitting gray trousers, brocaded waistcoat, and ruffled and pleated shirt. As he sank into his seat, a rustle of comment, eager whispers rose and sounded sweetly in his ears. All of Washington that could be accommodated in the narrow, steep galleries of the House had come out to hear him.

Never before had he spoken so well. Measured and calm in his arguments, with guarded statement of fact and logical inference, he covered in the three hours of his effort the great, sweeping pattern he had laid out, and at the end rose to heights of passionate denunciation of the pack that were hounding him in his sorrow. His tribute to Jackson brought

uncontrollable storms of applause from floor and galleries; and when he concluded, "I had rather be Sam Houston condemned to a dungeon for the act here charged against me than Andrew Jackson's vilifier on a throne!" a young woman in one of the galleries rose to the shouts of "Bravo! bravo!" and flung a bouquet of roses at Sam's feet. He stooped for the flowers, raised them to his lips, bowed, sat down amid the din that the Speaker's gavel could not still.

It was a triumph; he had used his opportunity well; from that high tribune, he spoke to the nation, and talk of his speech, the lights and shades of his eloquence, among men greatly prizing eloquence, spread far and fast.

The House's vote to fine him five hundred dollars, which by Jackson's order was remitted the next day, and its mild reprimand was a ludicrous anticlimax to the twenty days of thundering by the President's enemies.

In his stay at Washington, prolonged for some time after the trial, Sam's mind turned to the resurrection, in part, of the project that had ruined Aaron Burr. Jackson only smiled when he first laid it before the President. Then, as the vision grew clearer, the two sat more often and for longer hours at night debating it. "This, Sir," Sam said, "I cannot submit to you as President, for it is too far in the future, I suppose, ever to be accomplished in your administra-

tion, but as my friend and leader I want you to see that it is one of the inevitable steps in the building of America. . . ."

"You said 'inevitable,' Sam, and I think you're right!" Jackson sat back at length from a repeated tracing of the strange new map they had drawn. "However, it would be difficult to convince the country; impossible, rather!"

"Now, yes, but——" Sam fell silent, thinking of the thin but increasing flow of high-spirited American colonists south through the Arkansas Territory into Mexico; he had talked with many of them, and with the Indians—Cherokees, Pawnees, Comanches, who had penetrated to the scattered colonies, and knew what was in their minds. "Sir," Sam looked up, to put the matter bluntly, "the natural southwestern boundary of our country is the Rio Grande! North of the river, Mexico has only a handful of population, and so few soldiers that they cannot even control the Comanche horse thieves. There lies for our taking an empire."

The two bent again over the map.

"The Comanches," said Sam at length, "are prone to come up from the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas, invade the lands of our western Indians and steal their horses; someone might be sent down to make a treaty with them, and——" he did not finish the sentence, but Jackson knew that he meant, "and look over the American colonists in Mexico as material for revolutionists."

"It would be desirable, of course, to make friends with the Comanches," said the President. "Could you accomplish that?"

"I could try," Sam said gravely.

"Then do so. A first step, perhaps . . ."

A few days later, with a letter in his wallet of the most formal phrasing and with most impressive seals attached, in which all western tribes of Indians were requested to give him free passage through their domains and all practical assistance in his mission, Sam set off on a new phase of his career.

He halted at Maryville to see his mother, living alone now except for a few slaves, and seeming pathetically old and unsure. "Sammie," she begged tentatively, "I wish you'd give up this wild life you're leading and bring your wife here; you would both be such a comfort to me. The other children are all married and gone—ah, well," as he shook his head slowly, "I suppose it's another wild-goose chase you're going on now!"

What he told Eusabia of his mission, however, stirred her imagination, thrilled her. It almost seemed to the woman, now almost forty, that their talk was a continuation of that one more than twenty years before when the world lay unexplored before the feet of the tall boy headed for the Cherokee council at Oostinaleh. To her Sam had always seemed the Great Adventurer; she had suffered poignantly with him in the wreck of his happiness, had prayed that fit punishment might be visited upon Eliza Allen. All

the same, she had wondered at what she couldn't help thinking was his cowardice in running away. Now again she could picture him a leader, a captain of men, arduously intent upon a goal, spending himself without stint to reach it.

"This"—she held the formidable-looking passport signed by Jackson in her hand proudly—"has given you new life, Sam; and I'm glad! Glad! Just what it means, and just what lies out there in that strange and perilous land for you to do, I can't understand. But I believe it's something big, fit for you! So far as I'm concerned, Sammie, that's enough."

" 'Sabia! Red Head! Well, I must say good-bye again. Will you——"

"Kiss you, Sammie, dear? Yes." She did.

" 'Sabia, I—I ought to have come to you from Nashville, but I just couldn't let you see how miserable and sore and suffering I was. It's late to talk that way now, my dear, but I believe it's you I've really loved all—all my life!"

She smiled at him, her eyes bright with tears that she would not shed. "That," she whispered, "is something for me to treasure. Good-bye and good luck!"

She might never see him again, but just now that thought was not depressing. Her heart was at peace; they understood one another again.

SECTION THREE

TEXAS

Chapter I

SAM carried on his new mission something more than the high, steady flame of personal ambition that for nearly twenty years had lighted and warmed him on his rapid upward climb, only to die out suddenly in the frigid douche of Eliza Allen's coldness. What he saw now was not, primarily, the opportunity to draw applause, though he was showman enough to value it; out of the agony of despair and disillusionment that had chastened and matured him, he had won a patriot's vision. The Cause was to come first. The winning of Texas was to count always before the fortune of Sam Houston!

He lingered only briefly at "The Wigwam," paid a hurried visit to Jolly, then, fitting himself comfortably into his Indian clothes, set off in the pleasant early fall weather of the year 1832 to meet certain Comanche headmen at the little Mexican settlement of San Antonio de Bexar, four hundred miles away to the southwest. Though the council was a pretext, he went to it with confidence in his power to accomplish real good. He knew how to talk to the Comanches, win their respect and trust; and at the end of their leisurely conferences, they called him brother and promised to meet at Gibson commissioners

from Washington with power to make a treaty of peace. "We will come in the spring," they said, "when there is good grass all the way for our ponies." Sam calculated that they would arrive in May; meanwhile, they agreed to observe a truce.

From San Antonio he rode from one to another of the scattered Texas colonies. He sought out young Stephen Austin, pioneer and the most forceful of the American "empresarios" who had led groups of families from the United States into this land of limitless promise.

Austin, a slender, vivid man, an enthusiast and adventurer of the highest type, came to the meeting with no less eagerness, for he was familiar with Sam's history. They liked each other at once. Austin urged him to settle in Texas. "There's work here for every man that comes, work fit for a man!"

One of the few colonist leaders who were trying sincerely to coöperate with Mexico, he sketched the situation for Sam: "We have come into Texas at the invitation of the government, which hopes to make of us a barrier between the real Mexico south of the Rio Grande and the raiding Comanche Indians. If we're honest with the government, I'm sure we shall prosper in peace. Unfortunately——" Austin sighed, hesitating to put into words his fear that many of the colonists, hating the "yellow belly" Mexicans individually and despising the often pompous and venal Mexican officials, had no intention of remaining loyal to them.

Sam asked bluntly: "Is Mexican rule supportable in fact?"

"I believe it could be made so," Austin answered cautiously. "If we act in good faith, I feel sure we shall be dealt with justly. At any rate, that has been my own experience."

"You speak their language?"

"Yes, and perhaps I have taken more trouble than most to understand Mexican manners and temper. Of course, if the threat of tyranny——" again Austin made a suggestive pause.

"Sir," said Sam, admiration and amusement in the smile that lifted the corners of his wide mouth, "if all of the American colonists and all of the Mexican officials were as tolerant and as honest as you, we could safely put certain notions out of our heads. We should have found the promised land indeed! But—well, I shall be glad to cast my lot with these experimenters."

Austin went off to Georgia to recruit fresh colonists, retaining stubbornly his faith in Mexico, while Sam took the road to "The Wigwam" to set his affairs in order there, bearing the conviction that revolt was certain. He had talked with many of the settlers, men whose like he knew as well as he knew himself, and found them full of complaints against the agents of the Spaniard, Iturbide, who had made himself Emperor of Mexico.

From the easternmost settlement of Americans in Texas, Nacogdoches, close to the border of Louis-

iana, he wrote his impressions to Jackson. There was no uncertainty in his words:

"The day is rapidly approaching when I believe a successful effort can be made to add Texas to the Union. I have been in every colony, and I have met no American 'empresario' who is entirely honest in his loyalty to Mexico except Stephen Austin, and Austin will revolt at an open display of tyranny—which is certain to be made. I mean to make Texas my home. The men who, I firmly believe, will carve out of Mexico a great empire to be added to the Union are such as you and I, Sir, have dealt with. Many are Tennesseeans; nearly all of the rest are from neighbouring states. Neighbours! It is fine material to work with!"

Sam got back in time to eat Talahina's Thanksgiving goose, and to meet at the house of the commandant at Gibson a distinguished American author, Washington Irving, just back from a jaunt over the prairies to the west and overflowing with talk of his experiences. Before taking the steamboat on the first stage of his journey back to New York, Irving drew Sam aside to say very seriously:

"You make me envious, Sir! While I and the rest of us poor authors try to imagine romance and set it down on paper, you live it. Now, I hear that you're off in the next chapter to Texas."

"Come along with me," Sam laughed in his silent way. "You would be very welcome, and you might

find stirring scenes for your next romance." But it was not the personal experience of months and months of mud, fever, hunger, difficult battles with envious and ambitious rivals and the raw, body-punishing campaigns with restless, badly equipped troops that interested the elegant Irving. Even on that amply supplied, conducted, and protected circle through the prairies he had companioned hardship closely enough.

Sam told Talahina of his decision. "Three separate times," he said, speaking in allegorical terms he knew she would understand, "I have seen ka-la-nu, the raven, whose name was given me by John Jolly, rise from the ground before me and fly south. I must follow. In Texas is work that no one but I can do. Work for Jackson—and I must begin at once. I leave my Cherokee father and my Indian brothers with a heavy heart. The path will be hard, a man's path. Now, you must make up your mind. Will you come with me, or stay? If you come, I will be glad, but if you don't want to leave your people—well, go away for a time and think it over."

And while he sat down to what remained of his store of Monongahela whisky, drinking through the night and casting up his accounts with life, his Indian wife went out of the cabin and down to the clear river that ran between "The Wigwam" and the military post.

Until the tragic day at Nashville that marked his disillusionment and heartbreak, he had served his

own ambition; before his love for Tennessee, before even his devotion to Jackson, he had set the rewards that might come to himself. They had come in abundant measure, and, he thought with a savagely sardonic smile, turned to dust in a moment! . . .

Close wrapped in her blanket, her eyes on the quick stream that imperfectly reflected the crisp starlight, Talahina considered her problem. Could she help him in Texas? She wanted to help, for while theirs had been the usual practical, arranged Indian marriage, she loved him. She was sure he cared for her; he was kind; he was vivid and violent and unstable; as he had said, she had seen him walking through hell. But now? His vision was fixed southward. If she went down there amongst strangers, could she keep close enough to him to make up for her homesickness? She thought of a song, a minor, plaintive, true song:

"Down the stream, down the stream all the leaves go,"

She could almost see them now, in the starlight, those sodden, late November leaves that were whirling down the stream. Two would cling together for a time, then the hurrying, never-stopping water separated them.

"Down the stream, down the stream all my days go,"

The waters of life, too, were strong, relentless, hurrying, hurrying and never stopping. Had the time come for them to fling her and Sam apart? . . .

Three years of exile; in his long and passionate letters concerning the wrongs of his Cherokee brothers that he had showered on Washington he had named himself "The Exile." What had these bitter years brought him? Sam faced that query squarely. Sincere love and sympathy from the Cherokees, a good wife. What else? "Damn it," he sat up very straight to fill his glass again, "I've learned to love my country! Here's to America!" He drank that lonely toast in all sincerity. Though the praise of men and the love of women fail, he could never be disappointed in his devotion to his country, for he would ask no return.

It was nearly daylight when he went to bed and fell into a deep, sound sleep. . . .

Talahina's vigil was longer, lasting until the sun rose over the dun, frost-touched prairie. If she followed Sam to Texas, where there would be only white women, she would suffer as an alien; and, unhappy, could she help him? No; and she must not hinder him by distracting him with the sight of her unhappiness. She had no doubt of his destiny. He had been great, he would be greater!

Suddenly she seemed intolerably cold and, shivering, sped back to the cabin. Sam was sleeping heavily; he would not wake before noon; she had plenty of time to make her preparations for flight. Her clothes she made into a bundle to take with her; she prepared and baked a batch of corn bread, leaving it in the oven on the hearth. She set a great gourdful of

fresh water on a chair beside Sam's bed; she tidied the cabin, aired it; and with Sam's quill pen laboriously wrote a little note of farewell:

"I do not go with you to that country I think it better I stay in my country with my folks I will think about you all the time."

She put the poorly scrawled lines on the chair beside the filled gourd, touched her husband's hand lightly, and passed out of his life. "Who can say, who can know where the leaves go?"

Alone, Sam had come to the Cherokees, and alone, the next day, he rode away from them toward Nacogdoches, that eastern gateway to a promised land. Heavy of heart he was, but for the second time in his life he was compelled to admit that he could be of little service to the Indians by remaining with them. He was indeed Ka-la-nu—one that failed to bring the fire! He loved them, but his fate lay among his own people.

In the small frontier town of Nacogdoches, in the "Redlands" of eastern Texas, the old wooden sign, "Sam Houston, Atty.," went up again, this time nailed beside the door of a log cabin. For the time being he had no other client than the President of the United States, and in Jackson's interest he soon set out once more for the west and a second conference with the Comanches, who had been influenced by Mexican secret agents to ignore their agreement to meet American commissioners at Gibson. Below the

Rio Grande as well as above, revolution was preparing, and the rebels had plans that might be ill served by the Comanches pledged to peace with the Yankees.

This mission provided the excuse for another, and more comprehensive tour of the scattered colonies. On his way out to San Antonio and back, Sam carefully gauged the rise of sentiment against Mexico, and sent his detailed reports to Jackson secretly.

His ostensible activity was noted both in Texas and at Washington. Young Albert Pike, lately come to Arkansas as a lawyer and self-appointed expert on Indian affairs, wrote to the Secretary of War that Sam was wasting his time with the Indians: "He goes to treat with the southern portion of the Comanches, who are already friendly; he will never meet there one of the northern portion, from whom is our only danger, and if he should do so he would be immediately scalped."

When Secretary Cass brought Pike's letter to the President's attention, Jackson laughed and said: "By all means we must save Sam from being scalped!"

"I was not thinking of that," said the serious and frugal Cass, "but of the account of thirty-five hundred dollars which Governor Houston has submitted for services and expenditures on behalf of the government. His reports, so far as my department is concerned, have been valueless, and I cannot sanction the payment of his account."

"Of course not, Cass," Jackson agreed, smiling, and took the paper without troubling to say that he

would have the money paid out of a secret fund which he had labelled, "For advancing the interests of Americans beyond the borders."

From the Comanches, whom Pike supposed to be permanently friendly and who at Sam's urging renewed their pledge, he rode by many short stages to a Texas band of Cherokees under an old half-breed named Boles. They had been established for some years on land granted by Mexico; and Boles wore not only the title of colonel but fragments of a once splendid Mexican uniform to support his claim to the rank. He must lay the foundations for such an alliance between Boles' eight hundred men and the American colonists that when the issue of war came the Cherokees might join the colonists—or at the worst remain neutral.

Almost eighty but still vigorous and keeping his grip on the band with an air of weary vigilance, hardly grayer than Sam himself, Boles had his budget of complaints to open to his visitor's diplomatic prying. The Mexican government's agents were venal and negligent; they either could not or would not keep off the Cherokee grant American settlers who boldly claimed the Indians' cultivated fields under other grants.

Gaining the old man's friendship and confidence, Sam advised him to prepare a petition to the Mexican government, asking for a proper survey of the Indian land and the removal of the whites. At Boles's request, he dictated the letter to be presented to

"Citizen Juan Martin de Beremendi, at the capital city of Monclova, supreme executive power in the free state of Coahuila and Texas." But Sam had no illusions as to the fate of that letter. It would be ignored, for already the country beyond the Rio Grande was in the turmoil of revolution. Iturbide was out, and Republican Bustamente was in—for the moment. The next step, rumour said, would be the military dictatorship of the little general Santa Anna, who had commanded the forces of the revolution.

With the old half-breed off on his hopeless mission, it was time to help shape the next moves on the chessboard.

The first had been initiated by Austin, who had accepted in good faith the Mexican promise that, with the creation of the Republic, Texas should be permitted to set up as a state independent of Coahuila. With the revolution an accomplished fact, Austin called a "consultation" of leaders among the colonists to choose delegates to a later constitutional convention.

There was no thought of disloyalty to Mexico in Austin's course, for he believed that the state of Texas would remain in the new Republic, with laws and an administration that would satisfy the colonists' needs and the claims of Mexican sovereignty as well. To the older and more realistic Sam Houston, this belief seemed visionary. He was certain that the measure of self-government the Americans demanded

would not be granted; and he was equally certain that Santa Anna, whose vanity was colossal and whose ambition was boundless, would refuse separate statehood to Texas under any conditions.

At Nacogdoches and throughout the Redlands, Sam flung himself into the agitation for separation with all of the power of argument and persuasion he had developed in twenty years of political success. Without discussion, newcomer as he was, he was chosen as one of the delegates to the convention called to meet at San Felipe, headquarters of the original Austin colony.

Into the saddle again, a big, grim, rather tired man, looking older than his forty-one years, carrying in his ample saddlebags a copy of the constitution of the state of Tennessee along with extra shirts, socks, bandaging material, and strong-smelling salve for the wound in his shoulder! Tired in body, the lines in his face already deeply sunk, scarred inside and out, his hair now grizzled and gray, Sam was the embodiment of that pioneer spirit which only death could subdue. Gone was the rather dandified Sam with the shirt ruffles and polished cane, and in his place rode a slouched zealot in mud-stained, coarse boots and a disreputable hat with sweat stains discolouring its band. He rode a tall, bony, and underfed horse that stumbled and drew from him sharp instinctive oaths. His hair was too long; he could not shave every day; night after night he went to bed after taking off only his boots and coat. But the other delegates were as he,

lived as he lived—all but a few of the San Felipe colony who had prospered and set up with their slaves a tiny nucleus of the aristocracy.

Hard-handed men met there at San Felipe. They cheered the clear flame that was Stephen Austin, knowing him for the gallant son of old Moses Austin, who had died in the stress of the very early days of Texas colonization, but they distrusted his promise that Mexico would recognize their action if it were sufficiently temperate. They liked better Sam Houston's blunt advice to challenge Mexico's sincerity with a constitution that embodied no compromises, that fitted their needs. As a lawyer and ex-governor, he was chosen chairman of the committee to draft a constitution; and his fellow committeemen willingly left the task to him. He made it almost a replica of the constitution of Tennessee.

Standing before the delegates—bearded and hard-pressed planters and millmen, harassed storekeepers and steamboat owners with heavier cargoes of hope than of cotton—himself practically penniless and without clients, Sam snapped out his words:

"It's a constitution for free men; I could have no part in the shaping of any other! I offer it for your pleasure. If you adopt it, I hope with all of my heart that it will prove acceptable to Mexico."

"And to Santa Anna?" a voice from one of the rough benches demanded. "I hear he's calling himself the 'Napoleon of the West'!"

Sam's lips tightened in a smile. "That is true, and

if history repeats itself, as it so often does, he may meet his Waterloo at the hands of some Texas Wellington!"

Laughter broke out amongst the delegates. "It's a fine constitution you've made," cried one, "but I wouldn't want to be the man that carried it to Santa Anna!"

"Nor me," agreed another, "onless I had my rifle along!"

Then they got down to the serious business of adopting Sam's charter, section by section; and at the end Stephen Austin volunteered to carry it to the City of Mexico. He was well known there; his sincerity, his friendship for those high-placed Mexicans who had granted lands to his colonists had been proven; and if any Texan could persuade the government to yield, it was Austin.

While the younger man set off on his long journey, Sam turned his horse's head again toward the outlying southern and western settlements. He rode down the Brazos River to the Gulf, then went by sea to Galveston, little more than a group of wooden warehouses on the island which Lafitte the pirate had made his lair in an earlier day. From there, he turned west, going as far as the Colorado River and the chain of frontier colonies, and finally heading east from the Guadalupe River. He could not study too much the hopes and temper of the people into whose affairs he had so quickly and deeply plunged.

Everywhere he found discontent, a growing resentment against Mexican impositions, impatience at Austin's policy of compromise. Politically, they were ripe for revolt.

Nor were most of the colonists finding Texas the material Eden they had expected from the talk of the empresarios who had lured them from their homes in Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and other states beyond the Allegheny and Great Smoky mountains. Lounging with them in front of their makeshift houses, busy with a long-bladed pocketknife whittling as he listened, Sam absorbed vivid pictures:

"We heard tell how easy 'twas to live out here—wild horses an' cattle an' buffaloes an' deer an' antelopes an' turkeys free gratis to any man fer the takin'. Maybe the' is such, but we ain't seem 'em. The Indians has chased 'em off—them an' the Mexicans."

The settlers' women added their laments: "Sakes alive, this climate! Hotter'n Tophet durin' the long summer, an' mosquitoes big enough to carry off a baby. They tol' us 'twas mild in winter, but you let it come one of them northers an' you'll freeze to death in you' bed! An' the alligators"—this was a woman in one of the bayou settlements—"you hear 'em bellerin' at night, an' they set you in a shiver; they come right up out o' the water to catch our dogs—an' babies, ef we don't watch out!"

In the westernmost colonies, the Comanches kept the people in constant fear, and along the Gulf coast was another tribe of huge squalid Indians, the

"Cronks," who smeared their bodies with alligator grease as armour against mosquitoes, and raided or begged as opportunity offered. Everywhere, the Mexican soldiers garrisoning the string of ramshackle posts from Anahuac, on the Gulf east of Galveston, to San Antonio, on the western plain, were growing even more menacing than the Indians.

"Fact is," said a harassed settler at Gonzales, "Santa Anna's soldiers're doin' their damndest to git the red devils on their side agin the day they undertake to run us out o' Texas."

On Lavaca Bay, Sam found a small band of refugees from an overharried settlement near Gonzales, whose spokesman explained:

"We was run out not only by the Comanches, but by Mexican soldiers dressed up like Indians! We ain't got no right here; we're livin' inside the ten-league strip o' coast where we can't get title to land. But we stay because we've got a chance to get away by water in case of trouble, an' we do the best we kin." Without tools, they raised corn by burning off the dead wild cane, poking holes in the ground for the seed with sticks, then beating down the new wild cane as it sprouted. They had no horses and cows, and only a few hogs and chickens; their table forks were whittled from joints of dried cane.

Here a woman broke out—women had the dramatic words for their resentful misery: "God A'mighty, I don' know why we ain't all drivelin' eediots, livin' the way we do! Us women, we ain't got

nothin' to do, we cain't spin nor weave, cain't make no garden withouten seeds, an' ef we did the wild hogs an' them other woods varmints'd eat it up fast as it sprouted. We cain't keep cows fer milk an' butter. The only water we git to drink comes out o' the bayou warm as your hand an' tastin' brackish. Mosquitoes an' flies by night an' by day till ye cain't rest. We're all sick with fever an' ague."

She stopped to drive a gaunt hound from the door of the shack, spat, then went on: "Yes, Sir, us women git the worst of it. We've got to set here withouten books or papers to read, no church to go to, no school to send the children to, listenin' to the dogs a-fightin' an' the boys a-wranglin'. The men, they don't have it so hard, they're busy part o' the time anyway huntin' and fishin', or maybe cuttin' down bee trees. But let 'em git a-holt o' some money an' it's mighty soon gone fer rum!"

Yet there were the courageous and hopeful as well as the complaining ones, men who looked Sam in the eye and asserted: "It's a great country, Sir! Maybe we're havin' it hard now, but we'll be rich later on. We'd stick here if we had to run around in our shirt tails an' eat acorns with the hogs! Near two hundred acres of good farmin' land an' four thousand for grazin'—that's what we're a-gettin', an' a man can do somethin' with that. Yes, the Mexicans are bothersome, but we'll handle 'em, give us time!"

So, little by little, Sam's picture of the colonists was built up. His heart bled with the sick and discouraged

and beaten, he raged at the cruelty and incompetence of Mexican rule, and by the dauntless ones he was moved to a sterner resolution to give all he could offer of comfort and leading. He warmed to the true pioneers, men who needed elbow room, who loved the vast unbroken stretches of prairie and dreamed of them sometimes under the plough, whose eyes lifted to the horizon with the look of conquerors. It was like the days of his boyhood to hear a little group of negroes, at their slave quarters, patting Juba fervently under the Texas stars and singing to the clanging beat of a plough-clevis and clevis-pin:

"Oh, git up, gals, in de mawnin'—
Oh, git up, gals, in de mawnin'—
Oh, git up, gals, in de mawnin'—
Jes at de break o' day!"

Here then was the human material out of which to make a revolution; here the hardened, reckless men to oppose to the death the aggressions of the Mexican government. Their spirits, backing the long rifles they knew so well how to use, must thrust back the drive of a Santa Anna now so evidently determined to harry them out of Texas. In stern fighting they must defend their homes.

Chapter II

SAM turned back to Nacogdoches convinced that these men who had once felt the Texas sun on their faces, whether of the high-spirited breed or "belly-achers," would stick. The pioneer always found it hard to face back, to admit defeat.

News came first of Austin's failure at Mexico City, then of his arrest, on the way back to Texas, at Santa Anna's orders, and imprisonment on a charge of conspiracy. Santa Anna proclaimed himself dictator, and began in earnest to harass the American colonists. He increased existing taxes, imposed new ones, refused even the pretence of local government, challenged titles, drove settlers from their lands on the flimsiest excuses. Then he made a move that stirred the most peaceful to wrath, decreeing that every American in Texas must surrender his firearms to Mexican soldiers.

Nothing could better serve the cause! Sam's eyes snapped as he read the edict, and the thin line of his lips was drawn tight against his teeth. In heart and mind now he was Texan. It was never the frontiersman's way to ask, "How long you been with us, pardner?" but only, "Are you with us?" To that question

Sam could answer, "I am, and to the end!" Texas was like a big strong-willed boy, rough, inclined to violence, but capable of winning the affections, worth guiding, worth fighting for! It was a land fit for freemen.

He shook above his head the printed order to the citizens of Nacogdoches to disarm, at a hastily called meeting, and demanded: "Do you realize that obedience to this order will leave a large part of our population defenceless against the hostile plains raiders, and without the means to hunt necessary game for food? We know that few Texans can live without their rifles. Only a puerile, spineless people could submit to being disarmed under the circumstances. Santa Anna's demands will be met, gentlemen, with rifles in hand, but their muzzles will be presented at the tyrant's heart!"

Cheers were the immediate response to Sam's words, to be followed soon by definite action. Nearly everywhere, Mexican soldiers were less than half hearted in carrying out the search and seizure order; they met the settlers' defiant threats with shrugs, and returned to barracks reporting that no arms could be found. But the commandant at San Antonio who marched with a detachment to Gonzales in order to take the town's four-pounder cannon, imported for use against marauding Comanches, took his orders so seriously that he could only be checked by a skirmish line of expert riflemen in the oak forest north of Gonzales. There was a clash, shots were exchanged,

a few Mexicans fell. The Mexican colonel retreated.

The Lexington of Texas!

News of the action ran swiftly through Texas, carried to San Felipe by loping horsemen, relayed from there to the Redlands. Committees of Safety were formed in the settlements. Sam's record as an officer under Jackson and general of the Tennessee militia made him the inevitable choice for general of militia of all Texas east of the Trinity River, and commander of the Home Guard.

The fulfilment of prophecy; and Sam was ready for the crisis, though it had come sooner than even he had foreseen. It was the time for organization, and his first move, as a practical soldier, was to send out messages urging coöperation of all volunteer forces throughout Texas. Austin, only lately freed from a Mexican prison, called a consultation of leaders in order that general measures might be taken; district military commanders must be chosen and given proper authority, and ways and means be found for carrying on necessary operations.

His words seemed dull to a Texas aflame with resentment against Santa Anna. Pell-mell, armed settlers rushed to Stephen Austin, insisted upon making him "General of the Forces," the volunteers, and demanded that he should at once lead an expedition against the Mexican garrison at San Antonio.

In camp near San Antonio, with a force clearly insufficient for the attack and doubtful of the wisdom

of the move, Austin succeeded in persuading the hastily gathered and poorly equipped riflemen who had rushed to him with the cry, "On to Bexar!" to delay. Meanwhile, delegates to the consultation gathered at the small central settlement with the inspiring name of Washington; then, on account of its barren inconveniences, moved on to San Felipe. There they were met by a message from Austin urging them to come to his camp, and promising to attack San Antonio if the delegates approved.

It was a proposal that appealed both to Sam's good sense and his instinct for the dramatic, and he begged the delegates to set off at once. But the majority decided that it would be wiser to remain in San Felipe —quite safe from the Mexican soldiers in case Austin's attempt failed! Hot and cold by turns, these Texas leaders were to become an increasingly puzzling and exasperating factor in the struggle. But Sam was realist enough to waste little energy in laments; when, in response to a second message from Austin calling for reënforcements from the East Texas militia, he caused the Redlanders to mobilize and march, he and a number of other delegates joined them.

When they arrived, Austin promptly offered to turn over his command to Sam: "You're a trained soldier, and I'm not. Your experience makes you the one man in Texas to lead our forces."

Sam refused. "The men here have chosen you, Sir, because they believe in you. Suppose you did hand the

command over to me? Those who are turning cold waiting for action and who want to get back to their homes would make it an excuse to desert. They are volunteer soldiers, without training or discipline, and as yet we must treat them like volunteers."

Austin saw the point. He put another question to Sam: "Shall we attack now, or wait until we are authorized to move by the citizens of Texas through their delegates?"

"Wait; it is but the beginning of a long struggle that must be organized and supported by public opinion. It will be necessary to set up some sort of temporary government; proceed in an orderly manner. If we rush upon Santa Anna's forces, which are ten times greater than ours and well trained and equipped, and are beaten, especially if we fail to seek authority, our cause will collapse! And we may never be able to revive it."

The two men decided that Sam and those delegates who had followed him to Austin's camp should return to San Felipe and set about organizing a provisional Texas government. "Many men," said Austin, "are for an immediate declaration of independence, but I agree with you, Sir, that the time is not ripe for that. Whatever high-handed measures Santa Anna chooses to take with us, we ought to show our willingness to remain as a separate state in the Republic. I hope you can show the hot-heads at San Felipe the wisdom of this."

Such a gesture would be wasted, but it must be

made; Sam in no measure shared Austin's lingering hope that they could continue under Mexican rule, yet the process of breaking free must be orderly. Separate statehood had been promised; then let the first step in the revolution be a state organization.

This he must say to the delegates, persuade them to forget their heat and make a dignified plea to Mexico to respect her own constitution and do justice to the colonists whom she had invited to settle within her boundaries. He must keep his head, in spite of those contemptuous zealots who went about asking excitedly: "Why make our organization temporary? Provisional? Hell! Patience with Santa Anna? What the Mexicans need is to be told to get to hell out of Texas before we kick 'em out!" The flaming young delegate who, at the very door of the convention hall, cried that one American could lick ten Mexicans was answered by a storm of cheers.

"So easy to say!" Sam thought, listening to the hurrahs. So tempting to play upon the patriotic zeal of men who thought only of their grievances and not at all of the very real military power of Santa Anna. His time came to speak, and he rose slowly, setting the deliberate rhythm of his plea by his very bodily movements.

"My friends, I think you know me well enough to realize that I am no patient ox. I can breathe fire and brimstone with the best of you, but this is not the moment for it. I tell you that there is a higher courage than that which would drive Texans instantly

into battle, the courage to wait for the propitious moment. He is not a coward who has the wisdom to prepare for the test.

"I have never yet hesitated to draw my sword at my country's call, and may my arm wither if ever I do so hesitate! I tell you that Santa Anna is only waiting for the chance to brand us as overt traitors before rousing his soldiers and the hostile Comanches to fall upon our western settlements. They will set fire to every home and murder defenceless women and children before we can rush to protect them. Fortunately —or unfortunately—I have no loved ones exposed to the ravages of those who are inspired to hate our very bones, but I cannot stand here and see the pit digged into which my good friends and their families are certain to fall if we act in haste.

"When we are ready, let us strike; and at that moment I will be at your service, ready to give the last ounce of strength that remains in me! Until then, patience."

That had been a difficult speech for a Sam Houston bred to recklessness, impulsive by nature, still wearing the striped Indian hunting shirt under his dirt-grimed coat, self-exiled from a civilization in which policy and diplomacy had replaced the argument of force, and with a craving in every fibre of his huge frame for the physical clash with the oppressors of his adopted and loved land.

The delegates listened, were impressed. They talked together hurriedly in whispers and mutters:

"That's sensible." "He's no fool; remember, he's been to Congress, he's been Governor of Tennessee." "He fought under Jackson." When the vote was taken, it was for the formation of a provisional state government.

Immediately, Sam was nominated for governor, but he refused to permit a ballot in his name: "I am still too much a stranger amongst you to hold that office. Choose for it a man known to all the settlements as well as to the Mexican government. Let me serve in the ranks."

The ranks for Sam Houston? Not much! They made him Commander in Chief of the Regular Army of Texas, elected Henry Smith, a pioneer, as provisional governor, and from amongst the delegates chose the other officers for the state, still ostensibly loyal to Mexico, which had been called into being. As a legislative body, they created a council consisting of one member from each settlement; it would serve until a formal election could be held. Relieved of his military command, Austin was commissioned to lead a delegation to the United States to raise men and money to aid the Texas cause.

Big words, the grand gesture, but how shadowy the reality! Scattered handfuls of Americans, separated by difficult miles of prairie, plain, swamps, and bayous, numbering perhaps twenty thousand—counting the women and children. Possibly five thou-

sand rifles, possibly not more than three thousand; no man knew.

This much was known, however: The eight hundred men that had represented the peak strength of Austin's command gathered for the projected attack on San Antonio de Bexar had steadily dwindled until only a few skeleton companies remained.

Sam was made commander of an army of shadows.

Chapter III

SAM had no illusions as to the difficulty of his job. He must not only create an army, but prove himself strong enough to lead men scornful of organization and discipline, impatient to get at an enemy they despised, sure that a hundred Texans could whip a thousand Mexicans any day! The material of his army must be recruited from a vast territory. Transport, arms, ammunition, and food must somehow be provided.

The following months saw the unfolding of a tragic farce; and until the curtain was down on its last act, Sam could do little toward carrying out his plans. His choice as commander in chief of an army that did not exist meant nothing to the fire-eating bands that sprang up at the news that Santa Anna had declared the formation of the provisional state of Texas amounted to treason. These, as well as certain companies of adventurers from the United States, like "The Grays" from New Orleans and Breeze's men from Mobile, recognized no other military authority than the captains of their own choosing. While Sam worked doggedly to gather, train, and equip a Texas force, seeing his handful grow slowly but steadily, these independent commanders of

volunteers were attacking Mexican posts along the southern and western borders. Fannin, wearing the title of colonel, with but two hundred men, and the redoubtable Bowie as his right hand, jumped five hundred Mexicans and drove them out of Conception Mission. Elated, they then rode to the almost deserted camp before San Antonio, where they were joined by another band under Ben Milam, and the combined force stormed the town, carrying on for five days a desperate hand-to-hand fight through the streets and from roof to roof before the eleven hundred defenders under General Cos surrendered. Cos's men gave up their arms and under parole marched back across the Rio Grande. Milam and a score of Texans lost their lives.

Confident that the revolution was accomplished, Fannin left a small force to garrison San Antonio; the rest dispersed to their homes. What price chair-warming patriots and timid soldiers like Sam Houston now!

Certain other bands, however, did not agree that Texas had finished with the enemy. A Dr. Grant was agitating strongly for an invasion of Mexico; Breeze's gallant men and the New Orleans "Grays" thought it a timely and interesting move. Their confidence impressed the San Felipe Council, which, apparently forgetting that Sam Houston had been made head of the official Texas army with authority to direct operations, voted approval of the venture.

Meanwhile, Sam's appeal for men—optimistically,

he asked for five thousand—to be drilled and organized and equipped met with a pitifully small response. Thrilling to reports of the exploits of Fannin, Bowie and the lion-like Milam at San Antonio, and credulous of the power of Grant's "invaders" to subdue Mexico itself, men asked: "Why does Houston want an army? Does he, perhaps, think of making himself dictator of Texas? Well, he won't; not by a jugful!"

It was time for plain speaking, and Sam did not hesitate to apply the lash of his black-snake tongue to the adventurers and to members of the council, making enemies amongst them who hated him to his dying day. To their fury he opposed a grim scorn. "If you really think Santa Anna is licked, you are the prize damned fools of the world! The war has only begun. The Mexicans have at least twenty thousand well-equipped and disciplined troops, and when they're ready they'll invade us and sweep us out of Texas unless we oppose all of our strength to them. It's my job to prepare this opposition."

He set up the framework of a real army, sending the able Fannin, with the title of inspector general, to the Gulf to recruit men from amongst the settlers and the newcomers arriving from the United States by ship. Other officers he despatched east and west on the same business.

Though the council had ignored Sam, the governor stood by him; and when within the month news came that Fannin was disobeying Sam's orders to send all recruits to him and had set himself up as colonel of

a newly formed regiment, which he meant to lead on the expedition into Mexico, that sturdy pioneer said:

"I don't know how long I'll stick as governor, General Houston, but while I do I mean to act the part!" With an aggressive lift of his beard, he added, "Here's my order for you to take command of the troops headed for Mexico, and I want you to act on it."

"Very good, Sir; I'll leave at once."

It was two hundred miles to Goliad, where Grant was mobilizing his invading forces. With a biting "norther" blowing straight down from the Arctic, Sam made the distance in two days. He asked Grant to parade his men, then read them his order from the governor. He faced them in silence for a minute before saying in slow, deep-toned, and measured words: "I consider the expedition against Mexico ill advised. Our logical course is to establish a defensive line on the Guadalupe River, and I propose to draw all of our men back from the western settlements to that line. There we can meet Santa Anna with a fair chance of holding him. We will fall back on Refugio, where Colonel Fannin is due with his regiment, and leave only a skeleton force here to assist the evacuation of settlers until the Mexicans advance upon the place."

Backed by the council, Grant contemptuously rejected Sam's plan and authority. Quite in the volunteer manner, the men undertook to decide for them-

selves; and the greater number voted to follow Grant. The rest, including Bowie, elected to rally under Sam.

Sending Bowie with a small force to join Colonel Travis, in command of the meagre garrison at San Antonio, with orders to blow up the fortified church and convent of the Alamo and then retreat to the Guadalupe, Sam led the rest of his handful to Refugio. Fannin had not yet arrived, but news of the governor's deposition by the council had. Sam was stripped of his only remaining authority!

It was not an unexpected reverse, and Sam rode back to San Felipe in a mood of cool determination to labour with the council. Before going, however, he returned to Goliad and made one more appeal to Grant and his officers: "You're engaged on a fool's errand," he told them. "You have only seven hundred miserably equipped men. Two hundred and fifty miles of desert fit only to support horned toads lie between you and the Rio Grande, and you haven't rations for three days. It's a mad enterprise! With the best spirit in the world and thrice the number of well-equipped soldiers, you could not meet Santa Anna's army in hostile Mexican territory with any hope of success."

Grant laughed, sneered, "Maybe you don't realize what fighting Americans can do!"

"I believe I do; I have seen them in action, Colonel."

"I know, General, that you have been in some Indian fights, but——"

"We won't discuss that," Sam interrupted, meet-

ing Grant's eyes with a glare. "For the sake of your men, I hope that you are right. Time will show. I bid you good-bye, Sir."

As a last act before resigning his command, Sam made a formal report of the military situation to the desposed governor, and then spoke of his fears for the men under Grant: "They're brave but ignorant, and in war ignorance is costly. Waste of time! While we ought to be forming a real army of defence, they're off on this wild-goose chase. Waste of life! That hurts me worse. But the campaign for Texas independence will go on, and some day we shall win; and I mean to do what I can—even if it's only to carry a rifle in the ranks."

Riding along from Goliad, Sam had to face a tempter—the shadow of the man who had run away from Tennessee—whose voice asked: "Why wear yourself out here in the cold and heat and fever of this cursed land, struggling against fools and foolhardy adventurers? Why not ride straight on past San Felipe and go back to Talahina and the shelter of John Jolly's friendship?"

"That," he told his shadow, "would seem heavenly for a time. I *am* tired and discouraged, nearly hopeless. But after I was rested? Take to drink and quarrelling with Indians agents? Lose my last chance to stand respected by the world? Betray Jackson, who never lost faith in me even when I was at my lowest ebb?—No, by God, not that!"

Sam had more supporters, however, than he realized; their voices were raised in the council which he had helped to create; and in order to get him out of the way, the majority solemnly voted to send him on a mission to the Texas Cherokees, to negotiate a treaty on behalf of the state with Boles. "No one is better fitted for the job," said one councillor with a fine sense of irony, "for he's a Cherokee himself by choice, marriage, and adoption if not my blood!" The fact that Boles and his band were already friendly to the new government made the joke even better.

Sam accepted the commission without protest, gravely, allowing only the slightest glint of amusement to show in his eyes. He negotiated the treaty, and brought it back for ratification to San Felipe, duly signed by Boles, Big Mush, Corn Tassell, and The Egg, their marks. Then he headed east for his too long neglected law office at Nacogdoches with not a dollar in his pockets, determined to work at his profession until the call came for his service.

He had not long to wait; he had hardly put the dusty office in order when news came that Santa Anna, at length free from the threat of insurrection in Mexico, was marching upon Texas with his thousands of seasoned soldiers, cannon, and long supply trains. Also, the council, terrified by the news, had sent out a call for another consultation of citizens to take defensive measures.

Sam's friends of the Redlands came to him and asked, "Will you take hold again?"

"You don't mean to say," Sam demanded, grinning, "that Grant hasn't yet conquered Mexico?"

"God only knows what's become of Grant. Sam, we want you to go to this consultation as our delegate, and tell 'em that the Redlanders are with you in anything you propose to do!"

The delegates were all too willing, now, to listen to him. In a speech brief and grave, with the deep anxiety he felt showing on his face, Sam proposed a declaration of independence and the creation of the Republic of Texas. On his forty-third birthday, the formal declaration was adopted and signed by the delegates.

Now it was time for him to go to work in earnest.

He faced a desperate situation. While he had been occupied negotiating the needless treaty with the already friendly Cherokees, a messenger had come through to San Felipe from Travis asking for help. A Mexican force had driven him and his hundred and eighty men from San Antonio into the Alamo. It was a situation due to Travis's disregard of Sam's orders to blow up the Alamo and fall back on the Guadalupe; the famous council had approved Travis's action, as they would at that time have approved almost anything tending to discredit "Timid Sam."

Hardly had the cheering over the new-born Republic died away, while Sam was urging that immedi-

ate steps be taken to relieve Travis, when a second messenger arrived from the Alamo. In it, Travis put his plight graphically: his valiant handful, with fast-dwindling food and ammunition supplies, besieged by ten times their number, seventy miles from the nearest Texas settlement, with a thick screen of Mexican cavalry surrounding him to turn back the trickles of reënforcing riflemen who tried to join him. Unless a force were sent immediately sufficient to break through, his end was near.

The consultation was thrown into an uproar. For the first time, it seemed, most of the members realized that a foolhardy policy had condemned their friends and brothers to a bloody and needless death; Travis had written that the Mexicans were displaying their red no-quarter flag. Members sprang up to shout impossible advice, argue wildly, thump the wooden planks serving as desks and cry, "By God, something has got to be done!"

In a lull, a delegate rose and proposed that Sam Houston should again be made commander in chief of the army. There was but one vote against him. He had just taken his seat after accepting the commission as the last message ever to leave the besieged men in the Alamo was brought in. Travis wrote that the end was very near; they had given up hope of relief; they were all resolved to fight to the end and die like men, gloriously and for the Cause!

The passionate, tragic message roused the delegates to a new frenzy. Men spoke incoherently, with

tears standing in their eyes. When delegate Potter shouted, "I move that this convention do immediately adjourn, arm, and march to the relief of the Alamo!" there came a roar of approval.

Before Sam lay a difficult and disagreeable duty. He must oppose that motion! As soon as he could make himself heard, he spoke with a stern emphasis:

"What you propose is fine, but useless. You were sent here to organize a government, set up proper authority, and provide for a Texas army. You owe it to those who sent you to fulfil the task. No one doubts your courage. No one could fail to be thrilled, as I am thrilled, by your wish to rush to the aid of the men in the Alamo. But you must not be traitors to your true mission. You have just made me commander in chief. I will leave at once, gather whatever force it is possible to muster, and do everything in my power to save Colonel Travis."

His advice was heeded.

To Fannin, still lingering at Goliad, Sam sent swift messengers with orders to march his men at once to a point between Gonzales and San Antonio where he and his aides would join him. From there they would make a forced march to the Alamo. With three picked men, young, tough, hard riders, he set off for the rendezvous. They rode to the limit of their horses' strength before camping, slept uneasily, were up with the dawn and listening for the sunrise gun Travis had fired each day as a signal that he still held out. They did not hear it; no sound of cannon broke the

morning peace of the prairie. They stared at one another. Was it all over with the defenders of the Alamo? Were they too late?

Fannin was not at the designated rendezvous, and they pushed on to Gonzales, to find the settlement in confusion. A hastily gathered force of three hundred and seventy men were standing about in excited groups discussing the rumour that the Alamo had fallen. While Sam was hastily assembling the men and selecting the officers, two friendly Mexicans whose families had sought refuge with Travis rode slowly in upon the bustle of preparation.

A silence fell upon the shuffling, hurrying men, whose eyes turned to the two weeping Mexicans on tired ponies.

They told their story: Twenty-four hours earlier, almost at the moment when Sam had set out from the consultation, the last desperately fighting defender of the Alamo had died. Of Travis's men not one was left alive; only three persons in the old church and convent, a white woman, her child and a negro slave, had escaped the Mexican bayonets. Fighting to the last as Travis had promised, yielding room after room of the Alamo only when none could stand up to meet the swarming invaders, the Texans had made their final tragic, glorious stand.

Chapter IV.

COLD, steady gray eyes looking out from under shaggy brows grown pinched by the smiting sun of Texas, looking only forward; a man become economical of speech in hours of crisis, because words clogged the flow of thinking and contriving; a self-forgetful figure that seemed to gain in dignity and authority as his clothes grew shabby and dirt-soiled; a man in constant pain because of the shoulder that must too often be neglected, with an involuntary habit of wincing away from the old wound; a slouching rider, saving himself from every avoidable jar of his horse; a leader depending on no man's counsels save his own; a rather fearsome, intent giant with whom none took liberties of speech, who cared nothing for affection but must have respect—here was the Sam Houston that faced a crisis more desperate than ever.

He wasted no breath on laments or rebukes. He faced forward, the moment's task to allay panic, look to the safety of the families at Gonzales and other western settlements. After that, he must make his army.

No commander could have better raw material, men born to pioneer conditions, trained riflemen from boyhood, able to subsist where anyone else but an

Indian would die of famine, brave, of course. But refractory material, hard to discipline—harder even than the men Jackson had laboured with in the Creek campaign—nearly every man of them having his own positive ideas as to how to defeat Mexico. Under pressure, he must somehow create the soldier spirit —all for the army and follow the leader—and inspire confidence in himself; otherwise, his commission was only so much waste paper. All authority in the just-born Republic was shadowy, in every sense the soldiers were volunteers; a commander would not dare to punish men for infractions of discipline. Orders amounted only to requests.

He had to abandon his original plan to stand on the Guadalupe; his handful would be swept aside in their stride by the five thousand Mexicans coming up from the Rio Grande with cavalry, artillery, and ample supplies. He decided to fall back to San Felipe on the Brazos River, and sent an order to Fannin, still at Goliad: "The Alamo has fallen. Evacuate Goliad at once; blow up all defensive works and join me on the Guadalupe."

The woman and child spared by the Mexicans at the Alamo had been taken to Santa Anna, in command of the column forging up from the Rio Grande, who forwarded them to Gonzales with the offer of a pardon to the Texas settlers if they would surrender at once; otherwise, he meant to drive them off the soil of Texas at the point of the bayonet! Mrs. Dickinson, still in a pitiful state of shattered nerves from

the horrors of the massacre she had witnessed, confirmed Santa Anna's boast of his forces. Sobbing, she cried, "There's thousands and thousands of the butchers!"

Her words created fresh panic amongst the men, whose instinctive reaction was to rush away to their families and get them out of the path of the merciless invaders. In spite of Sam's desperate labour, his pleas to organize, drill, and prepare to receive and train other recruits, many did desert.

The women and children were sent away east from Gonzales, and Sam ordered the men to follow slowly and in order. While they prepared for the movement, Fannin's reply to Sam's order came: He refused to quit Goliad; he and his five hundred men had renamed the place Fort Defiance; there they would meet the Mexicans and avenge the martyrs of the Alamo; *they* were not of the breed that runs from an enemy!

Sublime fools! Their folly moved Sam to a mighty rage; he swore by God Almighty that if he could lay hands on Fannin he would shoot him like a dog. Cooling, he pointed out to his own officers the impossibility of making a successful stand at Goliad, even if he marched his own four hundred men to join the five hundred who had been furnished with guns and ammunition from the United States. They would all be wasted, and Santa Anna's way be cleared for his eastward march.

His men were on the move, and waving his hand toward the thin column he said: "Here is the last

hope of Texas. I can only leave Fannin to his fate." His mouth tightened. "God deliver me from valiant fools!" he muttered.

He carried with him the hope that Fannin, whose scouts must certainly gain knowledge of the Mexican strength, would yet slip away in time and join him on his slow march eastward. It was a slender hope, however, and with a heavy heart he set to work to establish and stiffen the morale of his handful.

Heavy work, nearly impossible on that most disheartening of military operations, a long retreat! He threw himself into it with savage energy. No detail was too small to be referred to him. He made out marching orders, superintended squad and platoon drill at every halt, signed requisitions for beef and corn taken from the ranges and the farms, gave personal instructions to details sent to intercept fugitive riflemen and rally fresh men. On the march, he rode back and forth cheering the men not only by words but by his quick solutions of their doubts and difficulties. At night in camp, he wrote and dictated reports to the new government, appeals for more men, more arms and ammunition, help from the United States "in the holy names of Liberty and Humanity!"

On came the Mexicans, pressing his rear guard; only at the Colorado River, sixty miles from Gonzales, was he given a respite of a week for the drill-

ing of the trickles of reënforcements that had joined him. The Mexican advance halted temporarily.

Sam sent urgent messengers to the coast in the hope of finding men, arms, cannon, horses, and mules that should have arrived from New Orleans. They returned empty handed.

While in camp on the Colorado, he received news that the members of the government, alarmed by reports of men who had deserted and fled from Gonzales, had departed in a hurry from Washington, once more made the Capital, for Harrisburg, far to the east. Their action angered Sam, and in a mood of sarcasm he wrote to his friend Rusk, Secretary of War, "It is a poor compliment to me to suppose I would not advise them of any necessity that might arise for removal!" He added, with a bitterness due to fatigue and strain: "You know I am not easily depressed, but before God I swear that since we parted I have found the darkest hours of my life. For two days and nights I have not eaten an ounce of anything, or slept for a moment."

It was this fortitude, this willingness to share the hardships of his men, that was slowly welding his small force into a loyal fighting unit.

In that same week came the explanation of Santa Anna's halt at the Colorado: He had stopped in order to give one of his columns time to deal with Fannin, who, too late, had attempted to break

through and join Houston. Surrounded on the boggy prairie near Goliad, his ammunition exhausted, Fannin had surrendered. The Mexican officer who received his sword promised honourable treatment, but next day at Santa Anna's orders the survivors were marched out, in three separate contingents, and slaughtered to the last man.

That news threatened to break the nerves of his men, and Sam acted with characteristic speed. He summoned the frightened Mexican who had brought the information and, in the presence of his assembled troops, denounced him for a lying spy. "There is but one punishment for such as you!" he raged. "Tomorrow at sunrise you will be shot!"

The man was removed by the guard, and that night Sam went to him secretly, thanked him for coming, rewarded him, and sent him away.

Again the Mexicans began pressing; again Sam must give way, this time a long march of twenty-eight miles to San Felipe on the Brazos, a wearying, seemingly endless slogging through cold pelting rain. Leaving a scant rear guard in the town to cover the operation, Sam ferried his men and the refugees who had halted there on their eastward flight across the river on a wheezy old steamboat, and made camp on high ground farther up the stream. The last of his men crossed under fire from the Mexican advance guard, destroying the swinging footbridge that had aided in the crossing.

The river, swollen by the March rains, was im-

passable, and for the time being the enemy was stopped.

The following days were given up to intensive drilling—especially of the recruits that were coming in a steady, if thin, stream from the Redlands. Hour after hour, Sam strode amongst them in mud-plastered boots, breeches, and shirt, showing the sergeants how to snap out their commands, stinging the indolent with a cayenne tongue. Detail! Monotonous, dull, and necessary; said Sam: "You can't improvise battle discipline. Men must know what an order means, and learn to obey it automatically, so they can put their minds on the real business of fighting, which is keeping fit to fight!"

Sam's far-ranging scouts brought in word that the Mexican forces had split into three columns in order to sweep the rebels out of Texas in one effort. Santa Anna at San Felipe led the middle column; the other two were moving eastward at a slower pace to the north and the south. That was good news for Sam, raising the hope that soon he might be able to meet with a fair chance of success one of the three divisions.

Then he got word that Santa Anna was moving down the Brazos with fewer than a thousand troops, seeking a crossing, his intention being to rush upon Harrisburg and capture the Texas government! The Mexican's intelligence service was bad; he did not know, as did Sam, that the President and his cabinet —with the exception of Rusk, who had joined Sam —had departed for the shore of Galveston Bay.

Late on the afternoon of April 15th, Sam's scouts brought word that Santa Anna had begun to cross his men and cannon and supplies on a ferryboat which, thirty miles below San Felipe, had been abandoned on the west bank by a frightened negro ferryman. That was the signal for Sam to march, intercept the column, and give battle.

Early in the morning, after a night of preparation, in which the gunsmiths and blacksmiths amongst his men assembled the "Twin Sisters"—two six-pounder cannon that had come that day from sympathizers in the United States, shipped in boxes marked "Hollow Ware"—and cut up old horseshoes and waste iron into slugs, his force moved out. All, that is, except two faltering companies of newcomers under Bird and Martin that Sam peremptorily ordered to stay behind. "I'll have no doubters and squealers with me on this enterprise!"

The men who marched went with a will and in high spirits. They were seasoned, toughened, confident; they believed in Sam. They went singing:

> "Oh, come to the bow'r I've shaded for you;
> Our bed shall be roses all spangled with dew!"

They laughed when an irate widow stopped one of the gun crews that had drafted two of her oxen to help haul the piece, cheered her as she loosed her vitriolic tongue upon the men and demanded that they unyoke the steers at once. At Sam's laughing order, they obeyed.

Three days of difficult marching, with the men called upon a dozen times each day to help drag the two cannon and the ammunition and supply wagons out of the mud. Sam promised, "If we can reach Lynch's Ferry on the San Jacinto ahead of Santa Anna, we'll lick him, for he has no more than two to our one."

On the night before the last lap of the race to Lynch's, Sam wrote a short report of his plan and situation, one copy of which he sent to a friend at Nacogdoches to be kept safe as a matter of record and the other he turned over to Rusk as Secretary of War. It contained an arraignment as well as an assurance:

"We are in preparation to meet Santa Anna. It is the only chance of saving Texas. From time to time I have looked for reënforcements, but few have come. The adjourning of the convention to Harrisburg struck panic through the country. Texas could have started at least four thousand men; we are only seven hundred besides the camp guard. Though the odds against us are heavy, I believe we will win. My country will do justice to those who serve her; the rights for which we fight will be secured, and Texas freed."

They set off on the final dash, with Sam's challenge ringing in their ears: "We are going into battle against odds, but I believe with victory assured if we do our best. If any one of you doubts, however, let him step out of the ranks." None doubted, and, wheeling his horse, Sam shouted: "Forward! Let our battle

cry be *Remember the Alamo!*" The men took up the slogan as they brought their rifles up and swung in behind him.

Nightfall found them still slogging forward, to the piping of millions of frogs in the marshy flats. At midnight, amongst scrub pines growing on dry, sandy soil, they halted and slept for three hours. Between daybreak and sunrise on the morning of the 20th, Sam halted the column on a rise of open ground from which the half-dozen shanties of Lynchburg, a mile away and beyond the ferry, could be dimly seen through the mist. Scouts came back with the news that the Mexicans had not yet appeared.

"We've won the race!" Sam cried, his haggard face radiant and his eyes flashing. His triumph was shared by the cheering men, who were permitted to build camp fires among the oaks fringing Buffalo Bayou and prepare breakfast.

Before the beef was cooked, however, scouts from the south reported that Santa Anna's force was only eight miles away, moving up through the woods from New Washington on the shore of Galveston Bay, where they had just failed to take the fleeing Texas government. "The yaller bellies're headin' straight for the ferry," said the excited rider who reported to Sam.

At once, Sam moved his force into the low, reed-grown marsh land behind the road from Harrisburg to the ferry, with their backs to the wide alligator-infested bayou. Then, getting news that the Mexicans

were creeping up through the woods, following a cleared alley intended later for a road and which debouched upon the prairie a mile south of that rise of ground on which he had halted at sunrise, he drew the Texans back to the shelter of the high and dry sloping banks of Buffalo Bayou and into the screening oak grove. There, concealed from the view of Santa Anna's advance guard, they could form for the sweep upon the enemy as he emerged on the prairie. His outposts placed, Sam ordered the men to resume their interrupted breakfast.

The moment for which he had prepared, Sam believed, was close at hand. He walked amongst his men, his heart high with hope, approving them. Mostly young or of the type that toughens into a resistant and spirited middle age, they met his smiles and comments with grins on their fatigue-lined faces and the gleam of anticipation in their eyes. They belonged to the race of adventurers, picked men of that race, hardened and disciplined. They wanted to fight; *Remember the Alamo* was something more than a grandiloquent mouthful, it was a cry for revenge that stirred hearts still bleeding; and they were all fierce patriots who wanted to free Texas. Their flag, with its lone star symbolizing the hope of the new Republic, snapped gallantly in the April breeze.

It had been carried, proudly and defiantly, on a long retreat; now, thank God, it was going forward into battle!

The morning passed without action, only Sam's scouting parties maintaining touch with the Mexicans, whose advance had become a crawl and then had stopped before emerging from the woods. Santa Anna's men had stacked their arms, and behind their outposts were making up for the sleep they had lost on their forced march upon New Washington. Some of Sam's officers urged an immediate attack, but he vetoed that. He had no intention of hurrying an engagement. He wanted rested and full-fed men behind him when he struck.

In the late afternoon, however, he approved a cavalry rush upon the enemy outposts, and then an attempt to take a brass cannon which the Mexicans had placed at the edge of the woods. This last failed in the gathering darkness. Two Texans were wounded; one of them, unhorsed, was saved by a trooper named Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, who in recognition of his gallantry was made colonel of cavalry by his comrades. On being notified of this choice, Sam approved with a smile and the slightly mocking comment, " 'Colonel' Lamar is to be congratulated." He knew the fiery youngster, brave and dashing, but lacking in judgment and overambitious.

A boatload of flour and other provisions for Santa Anna had been found near the ferry and towed up Buffalo Bayou to the Texans' camp. To make sure that it wasn't a trap, the surgeon tested the stuff for poison, then handed it over to the men. To their usual supper of beef and parched corn they added

bacon and flour cakes mixed on slabs of bark and cooked, wrapped around sticks and bayonets. The camp guarded by ample outposts, Sam ordered his men to roll up early and get a full night's rest; he made his own bivouac under an oak in their midst, rising frequently to make his rounds of the sentry details and the sleeping camp. At dawn, he permitted himself an hour of uninterrupted slumber.

He woke to clear sunshine and a crisp breeze that had blown away the mist and mugginess of the preceding days. A welcome change! and men felt it.

Soon after sunrise, Sam rode out with an aide to reconnoitre the Mexican position. Through his glass, he could make out the breastwork hastily thrown up to protect the cannon, and from the direction of Harrisburg a column of marching men. Scouts came in to say that the column was a reënforcing detachment of five hundred men under General Cos, the same Cos who had been released after the capture of San Antonio by the Texans and had given his parole to cease fighting. So much for the Mexican's word of honour!

To avoid alarming his own force, Sam instructed the scouts to spread the report that the column was merely a part of Santa Anna's division that had been marched out of the woods, around a swell of prairie and then marched back in sight of the Texan outposts in order to scare them.

Sam judged that Santa Anna now had fifteen hundred men; his own combatant force numbered seven

hundred and eighty-three. Odds of almost two to one. He lost none of his confidence at the thought of Santa Anna's advantage in numbers, but he did not propose to yield any advantage his position gave him. A Texas victory must be made certain.

To his officers he said that unless the enemy forced the issue he would not strike until after the noon meal. "I hope," he said, "that if we remain inactive all the morning, the Mexicans will be so reassured that they will observe the siesta hour, as they always do whenever possible. Santa Anna's reënforcements are certainly tired and in want of sleep, and he would prefer to fight to-morrow. He won't expect an attack from us; he knows he outnumbers us, and he has a poor opinion of us anyway. If we strike at the right moment, we can lick him before he gets his boots on!"

At half-past three, with the news just come that the Mexican cavalry were riding their horses, bare-backed, to water, that Cos's men were fast asleep and Santa Anna himself probably lying down in his tent, Sam ordered his men to fall in under the shelter of the oaks, Lamar's small troop at the right and the "Twin Sisters" in the centre. This was a matter of five minutes, so well had they been drilled. As the infantry column set off to the left in order to put a grove of trees halfway to the Mexican position between them and the enemy, the troopers rode out to engage the Mexican left. The movements were perfectly timed; in the intervening grove, the column changed direction to the right, emerged from cover

at the double and then faced forward deployed for battle.

It was a swift, sure manœuvre; Sam watched its execution with a thrill of pride. These men were soldiers!

His cannoneers swung the "Twin Sisters" quickly into position and opened upon the Mexican cannon. Sam spurred forward, shouting, "Double time, charge!" then bellowed his chosen battle cry, *Remember the Alamo!* Behind him raced the Texans, keeping their line, holding their fire until they could "singe the eyebrows" of the Mexicans.

Not only were Santa Anna and nearly all of his officers taking their siesta, but their men were lying down; and the sudden apparition of the Texans, charging in a thin, wildly yelling line, their lone star flag bobbing in the centre, threw the camp into a hopeless confusion. General Cos's men did not have time even to get to their stacked rifles, and fled in disorder. Santa Anna, however, managed to form two scant battalions for resistance, but they broke when, under the first blast of fire from the Texans, the new recruits amongst the Mexicans turned and ran.

Never had the issue of a battle been so quickly decided! Within ten minutes, it was no longer a battle, it was an utter rout, a pursuit. Abandoning their pieces, Sam's cannoneers joined the chase. Up and over the flimsy breastworks, their avenging cry, half a snarl and half a scream, Sam's men ran to overtake the terrified Mexicans. Someone, in the elation of the

moment, started their favourite camp song, the sweetly sentimental,

"Oh, come to the bow'r I've shaded for you;
Our bed shall be roses all spangled with dew!"

and then the staccato refrain,

"Will you, won't you, will you, won't you come, my love?"

Infantrymen began catching the abandoned Mexican cavalry horses and, mounting them bare-backed and with halters only, they joined their own troopers in riding down the flying enemy. They took no prisoners in the first rush, for Travis and Fannin must be avenged to the full. It became a carnage. With bowie knives and clubbed rifles, they beat down and stabbed with a savagery that Sam knew he could not check. He was wounded. Two horses had been killed under him, and as the second went down a bullet shattered his ankle. He watched the pursuit from a seat at the Mexican camp site; and when it passed out of sight, reports were brought to him there. Before all resistance ceased, ten Texans had been killed and twenty-six wounded.

By nightfall the blood thirst of the Texans had been slacked, and Sam's order to bring in all Mexicans taken in flight as prisoners netted six hundred for the guard to stand watch over at the Bayou camp. It was agreed that the Alamo and Goliad had been amply avenged. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, proper toll had been taken!

As spoils, the Texans brought in great numbers of pistols, Mexican *escopetas* or carbines, ammunition in sacks; and from Santa Anna's headquarters some bags of sugar, cases of champagne, and such table delicacies as few had ever seen. The "Napoleon of the West" went to war well provided with comforts!

Supper was a joyous affair. Exaltation still kept the men at a high pitch of excitement. Laughter, loud and causeless, rose from every camp fire, and fragments of boastful talk: "I run the little yaller-bellied son of a b—— into the water an'——" "I hit him a crack with my fist, an' dam' if he didn't turn an' bristle up to me like a fice; I had to rip him in the guts befo' he'd let go!" "I seen he was an officer, an' when he holds up his hands an' says, 'Me no Alamo,' I says, 'the hell you wasn't! Me no sabe,' an' let him have it side the head with my rifle barrel; the bastard wouldn't fight!" "I taken two I just didn't have the heart to kill, so I brung 'em in." "Been me, I'd 've laid 'em out; you ought to see the one I scrunched—like a louse between your thumb nails!" Then a voice roaring, "Shut up, you bloody butchers, an' drink this here toast to Santy Anny with me!" The man, huge and bearded, waved a bottle of champagne about his head, popped the cork and bathed his whole hairy face in the foaming liquid gold. He brought it down, belched loudly, passed it to a comrade.

At his oak-tree bivouac, Sam received the reports of belated pursuers, submitted to Surgeon Ewing's

dressing of his swollen, throbbing ankle, ate his supper with a fine appetite, and listened to the turmoil of his men with the delight of an impresario who has staged a successful show. Let them brag and curse and get drunk, if they could find the drink; they had earned the indulgence. Late into the night, to the light of huge bonfires, they celebrated, made sudden, childishly threatening rushes upon the huddled prisoners, pretending to grapple with the heavily armed guards, serenaded Sam in ribald song, shouted with laughter when he growled, "Shut your gab and get away from here." They made gun-powder mines and exploded them, fired captured rifles in chaotic volleys into the tops of the oak trees. At last the camp grew still, and the men slept.

They rose reluctantly at daybreak to ride out and finish the round-up of the miserable fleeing Mexicans. In squads, they set off south and west to comb the woods and scour the prairie. Detachments of infantry were sent out to bury the dead, a job so little to their liking that in another twenty-four hours it became necessary to move the camp three miles up the bayou. The widow McCormick, on whose land most of the corpses lay, came to Sam with the hot complaint, "I won't stand havin' them stinkin' Mexicans layin' around on my prope'ty; git 'em off!"

He was stretched on an improvised cot, in pain, but he managed a smile as he replied: "Madam, I'd like to oblige you, but I have here fewer than eight hundred men, and they've done their work! If you

must have the dead Mexicans removed, get some of the thousands of Texans that haven't killed any to do the burying."

The widow went off growling, "A pretty mess they make when men go to war!" But Sam's words were passed about, to strengthen the link between them and him. They liked his thrust at the stay-at-homes. "I'll bet you Sam'll learn some of them belly-achers it don't pay to stay home!" They were thinking of the bounty lands promised the men who joined the army.

Amongst the last of the prisoners brought in, near dusk of April 22d, was a pale, shaking little man in a dirty Mexican private's uniform. Sergeant Sylvester and Trooper Robinson had found him cowering alone in a clump of bushes miles from the battlefield, and he had been hoisted to a seat behind Robinson's saddle. As the two passed the huddled prisoners, there was a sudden stir of excitement, a buzz of comment through which rose the words, *"El Presidente!"*

"Oh, ho!" said Sylvester, "we'd better take this *hombre* straight to Sam."

Chapter V

DRAGGING the captive off Robinson's horse, Sylvester led him to Sam, propped against a tree as he wrote a report of the battle for the refugee President of Texas and his cabinet, who had taken boats from New Washington, their halt on Galveston Bay, half an hour before Santa Anna's troops arrived. Sam looked up to see a pitifully trembling, sallow little object in a soiled blue cotton tunic, torn and dirty linen trousers, the battered cap of a private soldier and shredded red-worsted carpet slippers.

"Who's this, Sergeant?" he asked, eyeing the miserable figure in astonishment.

With a grin, Sylvester answered: "I ain't sure, Sir, but from what them prisoners said I thought I'd better let you quiz him. Robinson and me found him headin' back fer Mexico."

"What's your name?" Sam turned to the prisoner.

"I am, Sir," and the little man summoned a fragment of dignity as he bowed, "General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, President of the Republic of Mexico."

Sam stared. Could it be true? Or was the man demented? Then he noted a bit of fine frilled shirt front between the gaping edges of the half-buttoned

tunic; he could not be a mere private soldier, had put on the uniform as a disguise. With the realization of the truth, Sam's heart leapt. Santa Anna taken! Why, the war was over! Without him, the dictator who had made himself supreme in Mexico and had fallen here through overconfidence, the Mexican invasion would collapse; and holding him as a hostage, it would be possible to make a peace satisfactory to Texas.

Knowing too little Spanish to conduct a conversation, Sam sent for a Mexican officer prisoner who spoke English.

"Is this man," he asked first, "really Santa Anna?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

" 'Excellency'? Hell!" Sam protested, then, "Call me General Houston. Sit down, Sir," he pointed to a rough bench, and added courteously, "I'm sorry I can't rise to receive General Santa Anna properly; please ask him," he requested the interpreter, "if there's anything I can do for his comfort?"

Santa Anna spoke feverishly to his officer in response to the offer, and that one said, "His Excellency the President would be grateful to Your—to General Houston—if he could be permitted to open his personal chest; there is—is medicine in it of which he is greatly in need."

"Ah! Yes, of course." He had the little general led away to such privacy as he required for fortifying himself with the opium his chest contained, and for a short rest.

Then the questioning was resumed, under the eyes

of the Texas soldiers who crowded about so persistently that at length Sam ordered a space cleared and ropes stretched about it. Santa Anna, braced by the drug and now in one of his own uniforms, ventured upon a grandiloquent speech congratulating Sam on the magnificent luck that had enabled him to defeat and capture the "Napoleon of the West." For he took his self-assumed title seriously!

With a glancing smile, Sam interrupted: "Tell him that the Napoleon of the West may consider himself honoured to have fallen into the hands of the Wellington of Texas!" He had remembered his jesting reply to the man at the San Felipe constitutional convention who first repeated Santa Anna's absurd title.

"His Excellency the President," went on the interpreter gravely, "hopes that El Señor, the Wellington of Texas will be generous in the negotiations which His Excellency is prepared to undertake for his release."

"Release?" Sam's eyes widened with astonishment. "Surely, the damned fool doesn't think I'll let him go! After the Alamo, and the massacre of Fannin's men, after the lesson his General Cos gave us as to what his parole means to a Mexican? Tell him I think he must be crazy!"

More voluble talk from Santa Anna, then the interpreter: "His Excellency says that both Colonel Travis and Colonel Fannin refused to surrender and——"

"Tell him he lies! Fannin did surrender."

"He says he was misinformed. He understood that Colonel Fannin's force was taken in battle, and the Mexican government had decreed death to all traitors taken in battle. As for General Cos, His Excellency assures General Houston that he will be punished for the violation of his parole."

Sam shook his head, spoke slowly and with ironic gravity, aping the tone of his captive: "The President of Mexico deceives himself, but not me. I know positively that Colonel Fannin surrendered on the understanding that he and his men were to be treated as prisoners of war according to civilized usages. I know that at the last Colonel Travis was refused the choice of surrender, that the Mexicans attacked under a red no-quarter flag. I find it difficult, also, to believe that His Excellency the President of Mexico and the commander of the army was unaware of the fact that General Cos was a Texas prisoner on parole. You may inform His Excellency that he will remain my prisoner until his fate is determined by the government of Texas!"

Couriers were sent to notify President Burnet and the cabinet of the capture, following those who had carried the news of victory in battle.

Dismissed, Santa Anna retired to the spot where his belongings had been piled. The Texans crowded about him, loudly demanding from his guards to be "interduced to this here Mexican Napoleon," pro-

posing in sarcastic glee that a proper salute be fired in his honour from the captured brass cannon. To save himself from annoyance, the little prisoner lay down and wrapped his blanket about his head.

Sam had a moment of amused enjoyment on reading the message which Mr. Rusk enclosed with his own to the absent Texas government; out of it shone this bright verbal jewel:

"The sun was sinking toward the horizon as the action began; but at the close of the conflict the sun of liberty and independence rose in Texas, never, it is to be hoped, to be obscured again by the clouds of despotism. We have read of deeds of chivalry, and perused with ardour the annals of war; we have contemplated with the highest emotions of sublimity the loud-roaring thunder, the desolating tornado, and the withering simoon of the desert, but no one of these, or all, inspired us with emotions like those felt on this occasion."

"Rusk," Sam said, "you seem to think we're some punkins!"

What Burnet and the rest of the cabinet would think, and say, Sam wondered. They hated him as a newcomer who had "usurped" leadership by his forthright appeals to the common sense of the settlers. They hated him for his savagely plain speaking. Most of all, they hated him for his outspoken contempt of them and his branding of them as cowards for running away. There could be no forgiveness for him from them.

His own sober, realistic report of the battle of San Jacinto he supplemented by a brief message "to

all fugitive families of Texas," to be read in the settlements: "Tell everybody the news that we have beaten the enemy, killed 650, taken 570 prisoners. Generals Santa Anna and Cos taken, and three other generals slain. Vast amount of property taken and about 1,500 stands of arms and one nine-pounder brass cannon. Tell the people to come home and plant corn."

General Cos had been taken several days after the battle by a detachment riding west with a written order from Santa Anna to General Filisola, in command of the main body of Mexican troops, to set all of his own and the other columns on the march back to the Rio Grande. This order Sam had exacted from Santa Anna at that first interview. When Cos was brought in, there was a demand that he should be shot for breaking his parole, but Sam instantly vetoed it: "No, there'd be no gain now in killing him; we'd only arouse useless enmity. Anyway, you can't judge a Mexican by a white man's standards!"

This scornful mercy was, in fact, bitterer than death to that dishonoured officer.

Burnet sent word that he and the cabinet would come to the camp, and ordered that all prisoners be held there. A wearisome two weeks passed, however, before they came. It was difficult to keep the Texans cheerful and under discipline, for they wanted to do what Sam had advised, go home and plant corn. Impromptu riding contests, when the wild Mexican

pack mules were saddled and "busted"; shooting matches, using the captured and unfamiliar Mexican *escopetas*; horse races, foot races, wrestling; hunting rabbits in the brush—the men astonished the indolent Mexican prisoners by their restless energy. Once a careless smoker set fire to some spilled powder in the great heap of captured ordnance stores. Powder began exploding and loaded muskets going off; the prisoners, camped near by, became panicky and ran, risking being shot by their guards. But, laughing, the Texans rushed into the inferno and smothered the fire with wet blankets.

"They are not men but devils; they fear nothing!" said an awed Mexican officer.

At last the steamboat *Yellow Stone* chugged into the bayou and tied up at the camp; and with dignified tread, becoming to their importance, President Burnet and his cabinet came ashore. They found Sam propped against an oak tree, unable to rise on account of his smashed ankle. The President returned his salute with a curt nod and the words, "General Houston, you will immediately turn over to the custody of the government Santa Anna and the other captured officers of the Mexican army!"

"That," Sam said, "is what I have waited here for fourteen days to do. Also, I am prepared to turn over to you the rest of the prisoners and all captured material, except some ten thousand dollars we found in Santa Anna's treasure chest. This money we have paid out to the men."

Whereupon Potter, Secretary of the Navy, stepped forward in great agitation to protest, "You had no right, Sir, to distribute that money? You ought to know that it belonged to the Texas government." He ended his tirade with the demand that Sam be dismissed from the command of the army until he had made restitution.

At this moment, however, Rusk faced Potter, his eyes flashing. "Sir, what better use could you suggest for that money? For weeks these men went through hell to save you and Texas, and they had not had one penny of pay!"

To the murmurs of the men who had overheard the passage, and were outraged by Potter's words, the Secretary of the Navy got himself discreetly out of the foreground.

Looking on in silence, Sam smiled grimly.

With the prisoners and booty in their hands, Burnet and his cabinet were unable to decide upon the next step. Wordy and contentious conferences, to which Sam was not admitted, continued for three days; then, at Rusk's urging, Sam was asked in a formal order to make his recommendations. Formally, in the bold pen strokes that became so familiar afterward to Texas officials, he sketched a programme:

Recognition of Texas independence by the Mexican government must be secured before there was any talk of Santa Anna's release. The limits of Texas

must be clearly defined; they must extend to the Rio Grande and from the mouth of that stream to its source and thence northeastward to the United States. Indemnity must be exacted for all losses sustained by Texas during the war, these to be determined by a commission consisting of one Texan, one Mexican, and one American, and the United States to be asked to guarantee the fulfilment of the bargain.

"General Santa Anna," Sam wrote, "together with such other officers as the government deems necessary, must be held as hostages until these conditions are ratified by Mexico, and the Mexican government must take immediate steps to release all prisoner Texans and all Mexicans taken after allying themselves with the Texas cause. All Mexican troops must at once withdraw, all property be restored, and a guarantee given that neither the persons nor property of Texans will be molested during the withdrawal. All hostilities must instantly cease.

"On the part of the Texas government, a guarantee should be given for the safety of all Mexican prisoners and their restoration as soon as the conditions of the treaty are complied with. Agents should at once be sent to Washington to secure the good offices of the United States in the settlement with Mexico."

In another writing, Sam asked to be relieved of his command in order to seek more thorough surgical treatment of his troublesome ankle wound than

Ewing could give him in the field; and suggested Rusk as his successor. The first part of this request the government hastened to grant, but they chose Rusk for the command only after they discovered that the men would accept no other leader than the one Sam recommended.

His statesmanlike programme for settlement with Mexico was first ignored, then bitterly discussed, then later reluctantly adopted by his enemies. Naturally, this yielding only increased their hostility. To show their feeling, they not only left Sam severely alone, but forbade Santa Anna's seeing him—a measure that grieved the little Mexican sorely, because he had developed a genuine affection for, and admiration of, his conqueror. Finally, they refused to give Sam passage on the *Yellow Stone* when the government and a contingent of officer prisoners and guards set off for Galveston. They meant to go off and leave him propped against his tree!

This, however, was too much for the captain of the boat, who had got the story of the campaign and its dramatic ending from the Texas soldiers. "We'll not budge from here," he said with angry finality, "until General Houston is aboard!"

That was that! Sam was carried on deck accompanied by Ewing, who was ordered off by Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar—the youthful colonel of cavalry chosen in Rusk's place as the new Secretary of War. In Lamar's brain, somehow, had been hatched the strange conviction that he and not Sam Houston had

been responsible for the victory of San Jacinto. He was vain, boastful, arrogant, and bitterly resented the obvious homage the Texans were paying to Sam. He was a fit addition to the government.

When Ewing protested against the order, Lamar threatened to dismiss him from the army, and that meant loss of the bounty lands. Sam pointed this out to Ewing and tried to make him stay. "You know that I have nothing to promise you."

"What the hell do I care?" Ewing cried. "Lamar can do his worst, but I'm going with you."

He went; and afterward Lamar did secure his dismissal from the service.

Chapter VI

EARLY on the 8th of May, the *Yellow Stone* headed down Buffalo Bayou for Galveston. Stretched on deck, Sam ordered the Texans who were guarding Santa Anna and the other officer prisoners to stand at *present arms* as the little steamer drew abreast of the battle ground. Thus they stood, while a drum beat the ruffle of triumph until the blood-stained ground of San Jacinto was lost to view. To Ewing, who sat beside him, he said:

"I want them to feel the significance of their work here. That battle made Texas free. The next step," he paused, looking at his friend fixedly. "Well, I'm wondering what Andrew Jackson will think when he hears the news!"

"If what we've heard about your first coming to Texas——" Ewing hesitated, grinned broadly, "I should say he'll be pleased!"

"Thank God, Ewing, I have not disappointed him—thus far!"

"You're thinking of Burnet and his crowd? Yes, they're apt to make a hell of a mess of the job of capitalizing what you've won! And, after all, why do you submit to their cockalorum ways? You've only got to say the word to the soldiers——"

Sam interrupted with his soundless laugh, then said very gravely: "That, my friend, is exactly what I must not do! Neither I nor any other Texan must attempt a dictatorship. For the time being, Burnet and his cabinet are the government of Texas, and I will obey them."

"I suppose you're right, Sam, but I'm afraid if I were in your boots I'd be tempted to kick 'em out. They dismiss me! Why, damn 'em, I wouldn't crawl to 'em if they had power to have me drawn and quartered!"

"Don't get excited, Ewing; they'll hang themselves if we give 'em yarn enough—and I intend to give 'em the whole hank!"

"How *you* manage to keep your temper and remain calm, Sam, I'm darned if I can see!" and the hot-headed Ewing turned ostentatiously away as Lamar passed them on his way to demand of the captain of the guard an explanation of "that piece of silly stage business back yonder!"

"I've learned it in a hard school, Ewing! 'He that ruleth his own spirit——' "

At noon the boat reached Galveston. The little settlement was a wild confusion of restless, excited men, new recruits mostly, men from the United States who had come too late for the fighting and were indulging in a protracted celebration of the victory of San Jacinto. They crowded to the pier to welcome Sam with an enthusiasm that grew in vigour and volume as they got the details of the govern-

ment's treatment of him. Few were quite sober, and nearly all cheered the proposal of one who shouted, "Say the word, Sam, and we'll hang Burnet and his crowd!"

At that Sam's eyes snapped; he had Ewing help him to his feet, limped to a box on the pier, and waved an arm to command silence.

"Men," he boomed, "I thank you for your welcome to me on behalf of the Texas army. But the man who made the proposal I have just heard is an arrant fool! I will not listen to threats against the government, against the duly constituted authority to which I and every one of you owe submission. You dishonour yourselves by talk of overthrowing it by force. These men are facing a difficult situation, and acting according to their honest convictions. My part is to support them to the best of my ability, and whatever their opinion of me, and whatever their action concerning me, I mean to play my part like a man. I want you to help them, too, by maintaining order amongst yourselves.

"One love, one purpose, must guide all of us, the love of Texas and the purpose to make her endure as a state for free men!"

He meant his words. Out of his heart he spoke, and the crowd cheered him before dispersing to surround the improvised prison shed and corral where the Mexican prisoners were quartered.

Accompanied by Ewing, and half supported by a crutch that had been fashioned at the bayou camp

by a soldier carpenter, Sam found a lodging. Late in the afternoon, his men who had been relieved of guard duty and ordered to their homes came to say good-bye. "I suppose," he grinned at Ewing, "I may permit myself the pleasure of emulating the immortal George Washington and take leave of this fragment of my valorous army?"

"You'd better ask Burnet's leave!"

His farewell talk was short, spoken with feeling—a message that was to be carried all over Texas in the weeks that followed:

"Go home to your work and your families, but remain alert to the call that may come again for your service in the army, for the danger is not yet past for Texas. Don't forget that it's only a furlough. Remember your discipline.

"When liberty is firmly established by your patience and your good sense, as its beginning is assured by your valour, it will be fame enough for you to say, 'I was one of the army at San Jacinto!' In bidding you good-bye, I want to say that I am proud of the honour of having been your commander. I am grateful for the promptness with which you executed orders and for the union you maintained. My heart embraces you with the warmest affection!"

Then there were handshakes, fervent words tossed out in hesitant sentences. One said, "We'd like to see you President of Texas, Sir, instead of——"

"No, no, my usefulness is finished for the present! I am in great pain, and I must find relief—and rest.

The tasks that lie ahead of the government are heavy; it would be a poor sort of loyalty to the President to put myself forward now—even for the post of dog catcher!"

They laughed, and he turned away, confident that when his time came to serve them the men who had followed him would call.

Burnet, Potter, Lamar, and the rest who hated Sam could forgive his submission with even greater difficulty than his success. His forbearance alarmed them, roused their distrust; they refused to believe he was honest in his attitude, saying that it was only a showman's pose. Throughout the years, to the end of Sam's days, they and their partisans pursued him with a venomous energy, shrieking "Mountebank!" "Vagabond general!" "Squawman!" at him. They charged him with cowardice, intimated that he was not even present at the battle of San Jacinto. His name was enough to set them raging; they achieved, in their search for vile epithets, the final infamy, "Stinking Sam!"

But in the measure of his enemies' hatred the plain men of Texas admired, and came to love him. They were not fooled by the shrieks. They knew the real value of his achievement. From those who had made the long, heartbreaking retreat with him, the men of Texas heard the truth, how Sam had suffered with them, inspired them, saved for them their faith and courage. They knew who had named the hour to strike at San Jacinto, and to whom alone the

victory was due. They knew that he was wounded leading his soldiers. Let the jackals howl; Sam could afford to ignore them, and he could have anything it lay in the power of the people to give him!

A small seagoing steamship—half of the Texas navy—was on the point of sailing for New Orleans, and Sam made a formal request for passage. His ankle, he said, was growing worse, festering and inviting blood poisoning in spite of all that Ewing could do; and at New Orleans he hoped to find doctors who would save his foot.

Again the government gave way to their rancour. Potter answered, formally, that since General Houston was now only a private citizen he had no right to use a government vessel—this in the face of the fact that a number of private citizen friends of Burnet and the cabinet had already gone aboard.

Again Sam made no protest. He sent Ewing to arrange for passage on an American schooner. "Tell the skipper I have no money to pay him, but I'll do so later." Back with Ewing came the *Flora's* captain to say: "By God, General, you can't pay me for taking you! It's an honour to have you aboard, and I'll break out my canvas the moment you're fetched on deck."

Santa Anna, hearing of Sam's imminent departure, begged to be allowed to bid him good-bye; but, consistent at least, Lamar refused.

Just five weeks from the day of the battle, the schooner tied up at the Embarcadero in New Orleans.

By that time Sam was in the grip of a high fever, and so weak from the effect of the culminating strains of the past months that the captain thought he was dying. Eighteen miles below the city, at the "English turn," the *Flora* had been hailed by a group of riders demanding, "Is General Sam Houston aboard?" When told he was, they turned and spurred back to New Orleans to spread the word. It was Sunday, a shining summer day, and it seemed that all of the city turned out to welcome him. Only with the greatest difficulty was the crowd kept from pressing upon the deck and swamping the schooner. At length, however, a passage was cleared, through which Sam was borne to the sweet music of cheering, wild shouting, and the thumpings of drums. Hearing that demonstration, Sam thought, "I wouldn't die now to oblige a forty-acre fieldful of Burnets and Lamars!"

Straight to the home of Colonel Christy, an old-time Tennessee friend, he was carried, and beside him went another old friend, Dr. Kerr, the surgeon who, more than twenty years before, had operated on his shoulder. At once Kerr took charge and, assisted by another surgeon, gave the ankle proper treatment. He assured Sam that he would soon be out on crutches. "But you only just came in time, old friend!"

"God, it's good to be in the hands of friends, Kerr! You and Christy——"

"You're to rest now, Sam, not talk! And, oh, yes, eat; I can see you've been half starved."

The warm heart of New Orleans was good for Sam. Kerr's attention and Christy's excellent cook brought back health and flesh. Within a month he was up and eager to get back to his Texas home. "I belong there now," he insisted, "and I must be ready to serve my country."

He refused to permit the citizens of New Orleans to hold a banquet in his honour. "I will not, by any act of mine, allow the faintest shadow of disloyalty to be cast on the present government of Texas!" That resolution he held to throughout the long, slow journey to Nacogdoches, though a number of towns begged to fête him. And home again in the Redlands, he had to repeat, "I am now only a private citizen, and will not be treated otherwise." Then, because they were old friends who had come to him, he permitted himself the ironic comment, "If you must dine somebody, why not invite Lamar and Burnet?"

"Yes, we will, in a pig's eye!" one answered.

Sam knew his Texans! He was one of them in early training and in spirit. He knew that after an orgy, even a patriotic orgy such as had started with the Alamo tragedy and ended at San Jacinto, they wanted quiet and seclusion. Headaches were to be cured. He knew that the vapourings and ranting of Burnet and his cabinet in the protracted effort to

get the Mexican army off Texas soil without further trouble, to make a satisfactory treaty of peace, to dispose of Santa Anna in a way to satisfy everybody, and to get the new government to functioning wearied the average citizen. His own withdrawal, by contrast, pleased. If he had learned one thing in the long years of his apprenticeship to Jackson and his experience as leader in Tennessee, it was that there is a time for shouting and a time for silence.

His retirement, however, was briefer than he could have foreseen. He had hardly put that much-neglected law office of his in order again, and wiped the old sign, "Sam Houston, Atty.," clean with neat's-foot oil, when news came to Nacogdoches that a force of Mexicans was headed for Texas to rescue Santa Anna, who, after Sam's departure for New Orleans, had at once been taken out of his prison at Burnet's order to be turned over to the vengeance of a mob of drunken newcomers and only saved by Rusk's vigorous action.

"You bring this report as news?" Sam said to the two friends who sought him to speak to a public meeting. "It's more likely a rumour." To the men gathered in the square, he repeated the reassurance, "I don't believe the agreement Santa Anna made with me on Buffalo Bayou has been broken, though I may be wrong. We must therefore organize and be ready to act."

Almost before he finished speaking companies

were forming, and within forty-eight hours he watched two hundred men set off toward the Rio Grande. The men of Texas listened when he spoke to them!

There was enough truth in the report to frighten the Texas government. Burnet and the cabinet ceased their wrangling and finally concluded with Santa Anna a treaty on the lines Sam had laid down, announcing with a flourish that "perceiving it to be based on the highest principles of policy, humanity, and justice," they would faithfully observe it.

With the signing by Santa Anna, he and his officers were put aboard a ship whose captain was ordered to clear for the port of Vera Cruz, Mexico, as soon as word was received that the last Mexican soldier was off Texas soil and the last Texas prisoner was released. Santa Anna wrote a farewell message to "The valiant army of Texas," calling them friends and saying: "I have been a witness to your courage on the field of battle, and now I know that you are as generous as you are brave. Rely with confidence on my sincerity, and you shall never have cause to regret the kindness shown to me!"

Reading a copy of that message, Sam said, "Thank God the government has come to its senses; now Texas can get back to work with a will."

But there was to be still another farcical act at Galveston. Hardly was Santa Anna established in his quarters on the ship when another blustering commander of volunteers from the United States,

freshly landed, demanded that he should be brought ashore for trial. "The damn' skunk can't get off like that! We'll hang him as sure as God made little apples."

Lamar joined in the clamour, persuaded Burnet to yield, and the little Mexican general was prodded off the ship at the point of eager bayonets, his eyes streaming with tears of rage and fear, screaming, "Savages! Traitors!" Back to the prison camp he went, while more wrangling delayed the formation of the court-martial.

Fast riders carried this news to Sam. For a time he was incoherent with rage, then mastering himself he called together as many of the Redlanders as he could reach within a day and after indulging in one brief burst, "If I had been in Burnet's place, the mob would have drunk my blood before laying hands on Santa Anna!" he read them the sober, reasoned protest he proposed to send in the name of East Texas. It went to Rusk.

"It is incredible," he wrote, "that the government should thus repudiate its treaty! Who can have confidence in its promises after this? To turn Santa Anna over to the army now for trial will mean retaliation by Mexico, the killing of Texans still held as prisoners and the confiscation of their property. Shoot Santa Anna, and torture will be added to the punishment of Texas prisoners."

He ended with the argument: "Santa Anna dead is a menace to Texas. Santa Anna living, and secured

from harm, can be of incalculable advantage to us in the present crisis."

On reading these words to Burnet and the cabinet, Rusk reminded them that Sam was still the commander in chief of the army, since his own appointment was but temporary. That implied threat was sufficient to postpone further the formation of a court-martial—and in fact it was never held. But the government vented its anger on Sam obliquely by deposing Rusk and making Lamar, who resigned as Secretary of War, head of the Texas forces.

Whereupon Lamar staged what turned out to be a comedy. Mustering all the troops that could be gathered, he had them paraded and rode out in front of them. In fiery words, he magnified the peril of Texas, read his commission, and asked for a vote of confidence. "Those who approve my appointment march south, those against it march north!" he shouted.

There were 1,800 men in ranks. One hundred marched south! Lamar could not survive that vote. The army was without a head—and Texas roared at the joke.

But there was more than amusement in the roars; the men who had fought to free Texas added very audible growls. Burnet heard them, sensed a serious crisis for the government, and decided that the time had come to call an election for the choice of new officials of the Republic and the members of the first Texas Congress.

It was a wise decision; everywhere, political talk replaced war talk, while "Burnet and his Blunderers" were forgotten. Two candidates for President were put forward: Austin, the "Little Father of Texas," and Henry Smith, who had served as governor of the provisional state of Texas until deposed by the famous council that had approved the expeditions which resulted in the loss of Travis and his gallants at the Alamo and of Fannin and his five hundred at Goliad.

Good men, both, and Sam Houston said so with emphasis when his friends of the Redlands urged him to stand as a third candidate. "If I can further serve Texas as a soldier, I am at your disposal, but——"

In politics, as in war, there come times when action is imperative; none knew this better than Sam; and when the campaign, after weeks of feverish speeches in which the Austin supporters branded Smith with every vile epithet they could think of (sickening their own candidate by their violence), and heard their own man vilified quite as ardently, the moment for action came. Twelve days before the election, Sam's friends rode madly out of Nacogdoches with the news that he had agreed to stand as a compromise candidate for President.

The Austin–Smith feud was forgotten in the enthusiastic electioneering for Sam. The voting was hardly more than a formality. According to his ene-

mies, "Foxy Sam" had tricked Texas, and had shamelessly capitalized what, after all, was a very trivial military exploit at San Jacinto. But the great majority of Texans read with satisfaction the result of the balloting:

Seven hundred for Smith, six hundred and odd for Austin, and more than four thousand for Sam Houston!

Chapter VII

IN THE call for the election, it was provided that the first Texas Congress should meet immediately after the decision, in the early days of October, 1836, but that Burnet and his cabinet should hold over until the 1st of January, 1837. The first capital was established at Columbia, a small settlement near the Gulf, whose primitive little gray-weathered shacks were overhung by great trees with drooping beards of Spanish moss and whose single street was the ranging and rooting place for strayed hogs and thin-flanked bellicose dogs.

Sam came merely to watch the proceedings of Congress, and found that its members turned to him, and not to Burnet, for advice in their first legislative ventures. Enraged and humiliated, Burnet resigned. On the same day, Sam was inaugurated. Standing, propped by a stout cane, beside the rough pine table that served the Speaker of the House of Representatives as rostrum in the flimsy wooden dwelling that was the state house, he made his impromptu inaugural address, putting the serious problems of the new Republic squarely before his hearers.

"Our task," he said, "is difficult, as difficult as it

is inspiring. It is a splendid challenge to our good sense and courage. Our course is onward, for we are only at the outset of the real campaign for liberty, yet who can contemplate the future without a stirring of the heart!"

Rather shabby, lame, his face deeply scored, his big body not yet filled out and seeming to shrink under the loose folds of his coat, he stood before them with the old unquenchable flame in his deep-set eyes, his free hand clenched. What he said struck like maul strokes upon the congressmen: Texas must be eternally vigilant upon the Mexican border; every effort must be made to win and keep the friendship of the Indians; factional fights must be forgotten in the united efforts to strengthen the new government; and, finally, they must keep their eyes upon the goal of annexation to the United States. "In the recent campaign, this matter was fully presented to the people. They have with unparalleled unanimity declared they will be reunited to the great republican family of the North; and where our cause has been presented to our friends in the land of our origin they have embraced it warmly."

Over the long stretch of years, Sam's final gesture before sitting down has acquired a flavour of the melodramatic. His Texas enemies dubbed it "Old Sam's circus act"; but those who listened and watched were genuinely affected, nor for a moment did they doubt his sincerity.

"Now, Sir"—he faced the Speaker of the House—

"it becomes my duty to make a presentation of this sword, the emblem of my past office——" he stopped, unable for the moment to proceed, while his hearers grew tense with shared emotion, then, tendering the sheathed weapon: "I have worn this sword humbly in defence of my country, and should my country again call for my services in the field I expect to resume it and respond, if need be, with my blood and my life!"

Quick, spontaneous cheers, rather choked in many throats, rose as he ended. In that body, doubts, envies, jealousies, disappeared in tribute to the vision of chivalry he had raised.

Many days later, a printed copy of that speech came to the hands of Jackson, nearing the end of his turbulent eight years in the White House. He read it with close attention, glowed, then sighed. As fervently as Sam, he wanted annexation; he knew the value to the United States of that vast country; and realized, with Sam, that if it were not annexed it might become a peril. "I wish to God, Sam," Old Hickory muttered, "there were more of our 'great republican family to the north' that agreed with us! You've got a big job before you, but I believe you'll do it. If I could help——" At sixty-nine, the old man had no illusions left concerning the gratitude, or even the comprehension, of men, though steadily and single-heartedly he had held to his ideal of service. "They'll do their best to drag you down, Sam,"

he pursued his thought. "You're the kind that makes a shining mark. The more you do for them, the more they'll hate you—the pack that yaps at the heels of a strong man! But you'll beat 'em!"

Something of that tough, unbreakable faith in Sam, Jackson put in the letter he sent off.

It was to Sam a blessed balm and a loud, clear bugle call.

Another message, in a writing he had once known well but had not seen for a long time, came to stir his heart. Eusabia!

She wrote:

"Sam, dear friend, I have tried so often to finish a letter to you, only to push it aside, that I can hardly hope to find courage to send this! But I must tell you, if I can, how eagerly I have followed the scant reports that reached here of your long struggle, how I have used my poor imagination to picture the dangers and difficulties you have passed through, and have rejoiced in your success. As we say here, *you stouted it out,* and now Texas is free and you are President. Oh, Sam, there's one woman in Tennessee that is proud of you!"

He lifted his eyes from the letter, to look out of the little window of his makeshift office. He saw the rutted, dusty road, some lean saddlehorses at a tie rack kicking and switching their tails at the pestiferous flies, one log cabin, a disorderly heap of refuse, the stooping bearded oaks. Then these faded, and the window frame held the picture of an erect, spirited girl with a glory of red hair, a firm sweet mouth, provoking eyes holding laughter and scorn

of pretence. "'Sabia," he thought, "he is a lucky man that knows his woman before it's too late!"

He read on, through her recital of home news:

"Mother passed away in July, and now I am alone with my slaves, Amos, Charles, and Annie. Did you know that Brother Henry was in Texas? He went out directly after mother's funeral, said he had got tired of wearing himself out raising corn, cotton, and pigtail tobacco; like most all the men, he wants adventure, and I expect he'll raise corn, cotton, and tobacco in Texas!

"Just to-day, at dusk, while Amos was playing 'Over the River to Charlie' on his fiddle, a neighbour stopped by to say that Preacher Macrae was dying—and you remember when we were youngsters we thought he was old!

"Sam, I do hope you won't find your position too hot for you—not be like the bear that backed down the widow Gleason's chimney and had his breeches burnt when she grabbed a handful of straw out of the bedtick and lit it under him!"

He laughed at that; absurd what she would say—dear Red Head! He read on:

"You are always doing stirring things, tremendous jobs, and I wonder if there will ever be rest and peace for you? Strange, I have always wanted to be tossed by the storms of life, and no woman has ever been more measured and sedate. Now I am forty-two, and fat, and gray—and mellow, Sam, though you won't believe that. Yet sometimes I rage and in my soul rebel; growing ancient, fit for spectacles and a pipe in the chimney corner, and still, my God, a virgin!

"Crazy, shameless words, Sam. Why do I write them? It's because I'm thinking of you—of the great big lumbering boy with his arms around me, and the kisses that made me shiver and want to creep into his very heart. Sam, I would cut off my hand sooner than let it write these words if I didn't know you've lived alone since you left the Arkansas, and if I didn't know that you are too far off and too hard at work ever to be tempted to come

and pound on my door. I wouldn't let you in if you did come. I would be afraid, Sam."

The letter ended abruptly.

Sam got up to cross the room and kick viciously at the burning logs on the hearth. In the renewed flame, through the mist over his eyes, he saw her again, the love of his youth, and he spoke fiercely, passionately, as though she were there, "I've been God's prize idiot, 'Sabia!"

But she was right; he *was* hard at work, hardly able to lift his head from the mass of detail that crowded upon him, that must be weighed carefully and settled right. His must be the pen to write appeals for credit in New Orleans and elsewhere in the United States in order to arm and feed the small army Texas was compelled to maintain. He must plan for raising revenue in Texas, from poor men who had learned to hate the sight of tax collectors. He must write a proclamation raising the blockade of Mexican ports by the all but phantom Texas navy, and make it a convincing invitation to resume normal trade and intercourse. He must choose a cabinet that would include every faction and yet be made up of able men. He must set on foot a movement looking toward annexation. And so on, and on . . .

Neither Austin nor Smith, fortunately, held any feeling of hostility toward him for their defeat, and he made them, respectively, Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury. Rusk he reappointed to his old position of Secretary of War. He sent Whar-

ton, a rich and shrewd planter able to pay his own expenses, to Washington as the Republic's first diplomatic envoy. "First of all, we must secure recognition, then we can press for annexation. From what I hear of the temper of the United States Congress, it will be difficult enough to get anything. But you go with all the good will and backing Texas can offer, Wharton!"

Gradually the government took form; in the bleak, cold little office, Sam held many long and anxious sessions with Stephen Austin, and did not realize until it was too late that Austin was wearing himself out. Suddenly he collapsed, and his frail body could not resist the attack of pneumonia that struck him down. Two days after Christmas he died; but before he passed, in a lucid moment, he whispered to Sam: "I'm sorry, my friend, to leave you with"—it was hard for him to breathe—"so much to do. So—so—I have loved Texas—always—you will do your best for her?"

"God help me, I'll do my best," Sam promised solemnly. "I feel as if I were losing my right hand, Stephen. I must call Ewing." He went out, saddened, nearly broken, walking slowly to his office after summoning Dr. Ewing. An overpowering sense of loneliness and fatigue swept through him, and the thought came, "I'd give up everything in the world to go to 'Sabia and lay my head on her lap—everything but the future of Texas!" A tired, solitary man.

Presently he roused himself, sent a messenger for Bob Irions, an old Nacogdoches friend, and when he came:

"Bob, Stephen Austin is dying, and my heart is sore. Texas will never know a more gallant spirit! We must pay him every honour it is in our power to pay, and then, Bob, I want you to take his place, for the government must go on!"

There was more talk, and suddenly Sam rose, seized his hat, shoved the papers he had been reading in a drawer of his table and said: "Bob, I'm going out to get drunk. Oh, don't worry, I'll find my way back! But, to-morrow, just keep everybody away from me, will you?"

Irions nodded; he understood the need Sam felt to seek release from the intolerable strain.

"It'll do you good, Sam," and as they left the office, "I'll stand by."

He watched Sam enter the nearest tavern, went off to his supper; and early the next morning helped him to bed, locked the door, and busied himself with Austin's papers in an adjoining room.

After Irions had breakfasted, the French special envoy to the Republic of Texas arrived to pay his respects.

"I am sorry to say, Sir," the new Secretary of State returned the Frenchman's bow, "that the President is indisposed. Perhaps to-morrow——"

On the morrow, as Irions and the Frenchman neared the presidential hut they heard sounds of

blundering movement, harsh mutterings, and the voice of a frightened slave saying, "Yas-suh, yas-suh, I fetch it, Suh!" Asking the envoy to wait, Irions stepped inside with some misgivings, to be confronted by a wild-eyed, huge tousled figure, nude except for a red blanket partially draped about him; and in a bellow that reached the ears of the wondering Frenchman, Sam said:

"Hello, Bob! You're just in time for breakfast; I'm trying to get this damn' nigger to hurry it up."

"There's a man from France here to see you, Sam. But I'll send him away, and then——"

"Bring him in, Bob!"

The envoy heard a sound of scuffling, the clatter of an overturned chair, a great rumbling laugh, and Irions's voice in angry protest: "Don't be a damned fool, Sam! You're not fit to see anybody." Then the door was flung open, and a voice invited:

"Sir, come in, the President of Texas will receive you."

Hesitantly, the Frenchman stepped in, and his astonished eyes rested upon the half-naked figure of Sam seated in a chair that had been placed on top of the table. With one hand and a bare arm, while the other hand clutched the blanket, the President of Texas waved a welcome.

"Sir," his voice boomed out, "Ka-la-nu, the Cherokee, and the elected Chief of Texas, greets you, and"—he broke off to mutter to Irions, standing

shamed and annoyed beside him—"who the hell did you say this gentleman is?"

The Frenchman, startled and amused, bowed, backed away, saying, "It was very good of you, Sir, to receive me, but perhaps it would be better if I come another time."

Irions followed him out, to apologize: "I am sorry, Sir, but the President is not himself to-day. He has been under very great pressure, and——"

"I quite understand, Sir," and the tactful envoy shook hands with him gravely. "A touch of fever, is it not?"

On the following day the Frenchman received a formal invitation to meet the President, and went expecting to see again the bizarre figure, half clown and half savage, that had startled him. Instead, he found a big, clear-eyed man, freshly barbered, in fine ruffled linen, immaculate boots, strapped gray trousers, tiger-skin waistcoat and dark blue coat, just received from a New Orleans tailor, with his stout gold-headed cane lying on the table before him.

"Sir," Sam rose, bowed, and shook the Frenchman's hand, "I must apologize for my appearance yesterday. The fact is, I was drunk, trying to forget for a moment a very great sorrow that was added to a long period of strain and anxiety. But now, Sir——"

They sat down together to consider a situation that was of the utmost importance to Texas.

At Washington, Wharton had been received coldly.

The members of Congress from the north and east, holding the balance of power, were firmly set against adding another slave-holding state to the Union. Jackson, knowing that his message would be disregarded, refused even to submit a recommendation for the recognition of Texas. To go so far as to demand annexation now, he told Wharton, would result only in stirring up useless hostility in Congress.

Well, there was a way to change that sentiment! Let Texas secure recognition from France and England, and proceed with ostensible sincerity to form alliances in Europe, and the so-called statesmen at Washington might become alarmed at the threat of this new independent country thrust like a huge arrowhead into the flank of America!

The Frenchman caught eagerly at the idea, as did the representative of Great Britain when he appeared at Columbia. Each promised that accredited envoys would be sent from their governments to negotiate for recognition and treaties of mutual friendship and support.

It was a bold but difficult policy to pursue in the face of the universal demand of Texans for annexation. Irions pointed this out to Sam, warning him that if he appeared too friendly to Paris and London there would be trouble at home.

"I know that very well," he answered, "but we've got to take the risk. We'll make as little noise about it as possible, and try to fix the attention of Texas on home problems."

Chapter VIII

FORTUNATELY, Sam had two problems of local importance with which to distract attention, Santa Anna and the army. The disconsolate Napoleon of the West was still held as a prisoner, and although nearly ten months had elapsed since his capture, no court had ever convened to try him. In protest, he had written letters to the heads of all the civilized nations of the world. "Why am I subjected to this indignity?" he demanded. "Why am I kept here exposed to the danger of assassination? One attempt has already been made against my life, and others are threatened. My country has honourably carried out her promises made in the treaty, while Texas has repudiated hers."

A bill to free Santa Anna had been introduced into the Texas Congress, but had been defeated; and Sam, who was determined to redeem his country's honour, sought another method. He sent off to Jackson one of the prisoner's letters of protest, with his own blunt statement that it was a just complaint and a hint that the situation might be saved if Jackson could answer Santa Anna by inviting him to the White House.

Old Hickory acted promptly, and Sam announced

that he would allow the prisoner to accept Jackson's invitation; under proper escort, he could go to Washington. Sam arranged to bid him good-bye and godspeed, and to his great embarrassment was kissed on both cheeks by the grateful little man.

Sam grinned at Irions, when the cavalcade was out of sight, and said, "You see, Bob, there are more ways of killing a cat than by choking it to death with cream."

More serious was the problem of the army.

The government lacked money either to pay the men or equip them properly, and the units that had joined since Sam gave over his command were restless and troublesome. Rusk came to the President, alarmed by a plot which he had uncovered amongst the troops to march upon the Mexican port of Matamoras, take it, and enjoy the loot. As valiant freebooters, they would recruit such a following that they would go on and conquer Mexico, then come back and take over the Texas government—kick Sam Houston and his conciliatory cabinet out of office!

A wild scheme it was, without a chance of succeeding in the end, but capable of doing serious harm, even causing disaster, to the Republic. Something must be done at once to checkmate the seditious leaders. Sam, Rusk, and Irions held a protracted conference. Rusk was for severity, arrests, courts-martial, executions if necessary. "But suppose you can't get your sentences carried out?" Sam asked,

then suggested: "Try this: send them home on furlough. The real Texas men will be glad of the chance to get home, and the rest dare not disregard a furlough order. We can't disband them—I suppose you remember Washington's attempt to disband his unpaid Army of the North? Once the men are home, they'll soon forget their insurrectionary dreams."

Rusk took back to his headquarters the furlough order written by Sam:

"Spring is near, when planting must be done. No immediate danger requires you to remain under arms. You are therefore furloughed for an indefinite period, *but will be required to report yourselves within thirty days of the President's call on pain of being taken and treated as deserters.*"

The ruse was effective; the Texans departed peaceably to their fields, while the malcontents, unsupported, drifted back to the United States, wondering just what had happened to puncture their rosy dream.

Then better news came from Washington. Henry Clay, at the head of a powerful group of Southern senators, had made clever use of the unofficial but accurate reports that both France and England were bidding for Houston's favour by granting Texas recognition; and one of the last of Jackson's acts as President of the United States was the signing of the resolution recognizing Texas as an independent republic. Forwarding the paper, Old Hickory also sent to Sam a copy of Clay's decisive speech.

"I understand," he wrote, "you are the author of

the Texas constitution. Read what Clay says of it, and strut, Sam!"

Clay had "unhesitatingly" declared that "it is as a whole superior to the Constitution of the United States!"

"There," Sam said to Irions, handing over the printed speech, "is a sensible man! Bob, if you happen to be on hand when this grateful republic raises a monument to me, will you see to it that there is carved on the base, 'He was the best damned constitution maker in history'?"

Texas was steadying under Sam's firm guidance, but dangers a-plenty lay ahead, and his enemies were by no means idle. The fiery, oratorical Lamar had become, through the violence of his hate and the power of his eloquence, their leader; and when the government was removed from Columbia to a new "city" called Houston, the direction of their plotting was disclosed.

The new capital, a mere huddle of shacks and many tents perched on the bluff at the head of Buffalo Bayou six miles from the site of Harrisburg, which had been burned by Santa Anna's men when in pursuit of the government, was dedicated on the first anniversary of the battle of San Jacinto—a further tribute to Sam.

He had refused to make a speech: "I prefer that others should describe an event in which I had too intimate a part to permit me to speak of it dispas-

sionately." Then, relapsing from the formal, "You may not believe it, but I have some shreds of modesty."

He came to the "city" its promoters had named for him the day before and made a slow, limping tour of its raw glories. The new state house was a one-story shed of rough lumber, two hundred feet long and partitioned only as high as the walls. Two log taverns, a grocery store in a tent, a blacksmith installed under a tree, a harness maker, a row of plank shanties, tents scattered amongst the trees—such was the Houston he found. But he found also a great stir of men cutting trees, laying foundations, sawing and hammering. A boom town scene, and boom town prices asked—and occasionally received—for property: lots as high as five thousand dollars!

Carpenters were paid three dollars a day, a fabulous wage in that time, but a man with a horse to feed or corn bread to bake must pay five dollars a bushel for corn. Imported flour brought thirty dollars a barrel. A buoyant, reckless spirit ruled there; the tavern bars were crowded and their back-room gambling games were full from morning to dawn of the next morning; men who had earned land certificates for their army service were selling them for whisky and handfuls of poker chips.

Sam wrote to a friend:

"Rioting, fist fights, stabbings, shootings, duels enliven the days and nights. Speculation is in the blood; everyone seems demoralized. The people blame our new tariff law for the high prices, but

can it account for the fact that a bolt of cloth costing three dollars in New York and paying only half that much as duty costs twenty dollars here? It is sheer robbery. But they won't listen to argument. Most of those gathered here refuse to work. Few buildings are finished, and transport is all but impossible. I sleep in a tavern room of unchinked logs, on a raised platform covered with moss and a single blanket, and share the space with five others. Day and night, the noise and confusion is continuous, like a Methodist camp meeting gone delirious."

He wrote merely as an observer; he was neither surprised nor shocked; he knew the tune and the tempo of the pioneer builder, the lusty cravings of adventure-seeking men.

The day of the celebration was clear and hot. Families from settlements twenty and thirty miles away began arriving early, the girls eager to add something gay to their finery for the evening dances, the men intent upon swelling the crowds at the bars and at the impromptu horse races, the children excited at the prospect of the huge free barbecue at noon. Married women tramped wearily on the heels of their children, sought to drag quarrelsome and whisky-valiant husbands out of bars and the clutches of panting, drunken foes intent upon marking their faces with the heels of hob-nailed boots.

In the centre of the rutted plaza a tall flagpole bore the Lone Star banner of the Republic, and the state house was decorated with makeshift bunting and pine boughs. At intervals a band blared, three brasses, fifes, and two lustily beaten drums.

The noon barbecue over, with the lanky dogs en-

joying the huge half-picked beef bones thrown aside by the stuffed children, the organizers of the parade became busy. When it started, Sam led, accompanied by the British envoy; behind them marched the members of the government, congressmen, officers of the army, farmers, merchants, gamblers, idlers. A man started a song, an old fiddle song:

"Somebody stole my ol' black dog,
An' I wisht they'd bring him back;
He run the big hogs over the fence
An' the little ones through the crack,"

and then came the roar of the chorus:

"Goin' down to town,
I'm a-goin' down to town;
Goin' down to Lynchburg town
To take my terbacker down!"

"Extr'ordinary!" said the Englishman, glancing back at the capering, singing mob.

At the state house, all who could get inside packed the building, and the rest continued to surge and sing outside. At the exact moment the battle of San Jacinto had begun the year before, a preacher opened the celebration with a short prayer. Then the chosen orator rose to sing the praises of the new city, liken the Republic of Texas to "Imperial Rome springing full-panoplied like Minerva from the brow of Jove." For half an hour he smote the welkin, keeping the promise he had made to avoid controversial issues, but the temptation was too strong and he demanded suddenly:

"Who was it that made the glorious victory of San Jacinto possible? On every hand, on this anniversary day, men ask this question. They may well ask. Let me tell you . . ." In sonorous phrases and scornful, burning words, he painted a vivid, if distorted, picture of the long retreat of the Texas army from Gonzales to the Brazos, the fleeing settlers, the frantic appeals of the government of Texas to the commander to face about and halt the pursuit of the murderous Mexicans.

"And then, my friends! What, then? Not twenty miles from where we are celebrating the victory of San Jacinto, on the banks of Buffalo Bayou, a gallant man, a fearless fighter, refused to retreat one foot farther. He rallied the brave men of Texas, he rode out to battle. He led on to victory. You ask, who was this man? I will tell you. That valiant saviour of Texas was *Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar!*"

A gasp of astonishment rose from the packed benches, some cheers, a vast explosion of hisses that became roars of angry denial, catcalls, shrieks: "It's a damn lie!" "Sam Houston won that battle!" "Sam! Sam! Git up, Sam, an' tell that damn' skunk he lies!"

The British envoy turned a puzzled face to Sam, "What in the world does this mean, Your Excellency?"

His answer was punctuated by a silent laugh: "They intend to run Lamar for President to succeed me, and that fellow's starting the parade."

Chapter IX

THEN to work, amid the inceasing chaos of the new capital, grim wrestling with the life-and-death issues of a state struggling for form to the sound of drunken men racing their horses wildly through the street, shooting and whooping, rousing at night to watch the flicker of flames gulping some resiny pine shack while hurrying and cursing blacks and whites formed bucket brigades in the hopeless effort to save it.

Sam had outlined certain imperative legislative measures, and waited impatiently for the assembling of Congress on the 1st of May. The session was delayed three days until a quorum had arrived. When at last it could be called, Sam laid his programme before them. Calmly, without flourishes, he reminded them that the time had come for putting into effect certain necessary, if prosaic and unpopular, laws: The tariff must be readjusted to encourage trade and increase the revenue; direct taxation must be instituted; an efficient land office must be provided, and its task of surveying the vast territory of the Republic must be financed, in order that bounty lands might be allotted and new settlers be given proper titles.

Texas must have a sufficient army, he insisted, to guard the Rio Grande border and control the freebooter factions that threatened her peace from within. Finally, he made his plea for fair treatment of the Indians—the most hopeless plea a man could make in Texas.

There followed weeks of struggle, of contriving, persuading and bullying. In Congress, the faction that opposed Sam and looked forward to putting Lamar in his place when the next election came—Sam's constitution provided that he could not succeed himself—fought his measures with fanatic zeal. But one by one he forced them through, even the direct tax law. If his enemies hit hard, in Congress and in fiery speeches outside, he pounded them harder. He seemed to thrive on their hatred, kept his head.

Only in his Indian programme did he meet defeat. He wanted not only to protect those fragments of friendly tribes, like Boles's band of Cherokees, already in Texas, but he hoped to bring others under the protection of the Republic. But the Texans were fixed in their enmity to all Indians; to the rallying cry of "Texas for the Texans," they proposed to repudiate the treaty made with Boles, run the Cherokees out, and get rid of the Comanches by killing them. Sam was able to prevent aggressive action during the rest of his term, but he had to write to his Cherokee and Creek friends on the Arkansas who wished to remove to the land where he was chief:

"The request you make must go for approval to our congress, our council, and I cannot promise to control the decision. Few of the councillors think about your people as I do. I advise my brothers on the Arkansas, therefore, to remain at their homes, go on planting corn and keeping peace amongst themselves and the people around them. Tell them this. Tell them, also, that I hope my words will rest upon their hearts."

He must be honest with the Indians, try to prepare them for the tragic time that must come after he stepped down from the presidency. He had a moment of regret, on their account, that he had written into the constitution that single-term provision. Then he lifted his head to say, as though he were speaking to his Indian friends, "In spite of the sorrow that may come upon you when I am out, it was wise. Texas must never have a dictator!"

By now, such an expression had become instinctive. Not the personal fortune of Sam Houston and his friends mattered, but the welfare of Texas; and it was a period when dictatorships were all too easy to set up.

Soon after this letter went out to Peter Harper, on the Arkansas, another man came down to Sam from Tah-lon-tusky carrying a writing with the scratches at the end that identified the signature of John Jolly.

The old Cherokee's message ran:

"My son, I have asked the white man that writes this for me to give you the news. I speak out of my heart as a father to tell you I am well, and my thoughts are with you. The reason I send this letter, Talahina is gone; she passed away in her people's house just a few days ago. She was not sick a long time; the

doctor from Gibson said it was something that hurt her lungs. Her heart was with you in all the great fighting and journeying you have done. She spoke many times at my house about you, and about that time you told her the bird ka-la-nu called you away to the south. She was sorry, I think, because that bird did not call her, too. She was a fine woman, my son. I thought about her just like she was my daughter, and I felt bad after she was gone."

The letter fell to the table, and Sam sat staring into the past, muttering: "They pass. They pass, Sam, and you are left alone." He rose, walked slowly to the small oval daguerreotype of 'Hina he had brought from "The Wigwam" and fastened to the log wall of his bedroom. Her face, dark and somehow grave through the smile she had turned upon the itinerant picture maker, seemed to radiate a serene assurance. " 'Hina," he asked in a whisper, "was I wrong not to insist upon your coming with me?"

Who could say, now? What he did recall, and took comfort from the recollection, was that she had cut clean away, that *she* had had no doubts. Had she come, his work would certainly have been made more difficult, for never would the prejudiced, Indian-hating Texans have accepted her. "Damn 'em!" he swore savagely under his breath, thinking of these thousands whom he scorned for their bigotry and loved for their courage. "They neither know nor care to know the Indians." Oh, it must surely have been better for 'Hina to have lived and died amongst her people than to have followed him and been sickened and saddened by the knowledge that his Texas friends and neighbours despised her. But the thought

could not lift the burden of depression that lay heavy upon him. . . . But to work; again that was the anodyne for him!

The last year of his term neared its end. Much he had been able to do, but so much more remained to be done! Only a Titan in body could have endured the strain, and only a mind clear and quick could have met and solved the problems he had wrestled with, the machinations of enemies more concerned with his downfall than with the thought of Texas's future.

The government he had built was as yet no firm, rock-founded republic. Its credit was pitifully weak, its European alliances were still shaky, its servants knew not from day to day how they were to be paid. But it functioned according to the formula Sam had laid down. There was peace, within and with Mexico, and trade was going on, not only with the United States and countries over the sea, but with the people below the Rio Grande. Land claims had been adjusted. The stream of incoming settlers was swelling. The survey of Texas and its sectionizing was under way.

But two serious dangers still threatened: the flood of speculative adventurers that followed the flow of genuine settlers, and the growing power of Lamar and his noisy followers, determined to wrest control of Texas from such drab realists as Sam and overset his far-sighted policy of peace and order.

Of the adventurers, the speculative and turbulent

"freebooters," he said bitterly: "They're worse than traitors! I would to God we could close our borders until this frenzy of speculation they have fostered is past. They have made the capital a bawdy house, and I am ashamed to receive here visitors from abroad."

Lamar's candidacy was well known. Sam hoped to defeat him by the naming of one of his close friends and a staunch supporter; and that hope seemed likely to be fulfilled until, within a few days of the election, his candidate died. Lamar was chosen practically without opposition.

Sam's enemies were jubilant. "Now," they promised, "he'll get what's coming to him. Now we'll have the chance to make a Texas worth living in!"

They lost no time in showing him that Texas was through with him. Discarded, finished, done with, forgotten! The committee that arranged for Lamar's inaugural refused to make a place on the programme for Sam's valedictory address, though they dared not go so far as to exclude him from the group on the balcony from which the new President was to speak to the people.

The plaza was full of men, drawn by the promise of verbal fireworks—Lamar men, the committee hoped and believed. Yet when Sam limped out into sight, following the cocky Lamar, a great burst of cheering greeted him. He took a seat in the background, after a mere nod of acknowledgment to the

crowd, prepared to listen to his successor's plans for overturning the still uncertain structure he had fought so savagely to rear. After all—it was the one doubtful bit of comfort he could find in his thoughts—three years, the length of the presidential term provided by the constitution after the first of two years, was a brief span in the life of a nation. Then there would be another election, and if he were needed there would be no bar to his choice. He must bide his time, retire into silence and private life.

The restless crowd, milling about in a shifting fan pattern below the balcony, seemed to be struck dumb for a moment when Lamar came forward to lay his hand on the railing and trumpet, "Friends and fellow Texans!" Then the people found voice; a chant, dominating the hisses of Lamar's friends, rose and grew in volume: "We want Sam! We want Sam!" Lamar's words could not be heard, try as he would to shriek them above the clamour; he waved his arms madly, in what he imagined to be commanding gestures. The rhythm of the crowd's chant grew short, grew fierce: "We want Sam! We want Sam! We want Sam!"

White and shaking with fury, Lamar stepped back and sat down.

Sam rose slowly, came to the railing, leaned on it with one hand, the other on his cane. He had to wait until the cheering died out, and the laughter that followed a loud shout, "By God, Sam, we won't let 'em muzzle you like a yaller dog!"

"Gentlemen," the voice that they knew boomed out, resonant yet suave and charged with irony, "this is quite unexpected! I was not counting upon addressing you, nor was it intended by the distinguished gentlemen who planned the inaugural that I should. In obedience to the constitution, I am laying down my task, unfinished as it is, and it will be the duty of the man you have chosen to succeed me to set forth his policy and programme. As a citizen of Texas, however, sharing your hopes and fears for the future, may I dwell upon them for a moment?"

For two hours the moment was extended, and in all that time he held them silent and nearly motionless by the passionate, eloquent plea he made for the steady hand and level head. Like a great violinist, he moved and swayed them with swiftly drawn and homely pictures of the struggles they had shared, and of the vast possibilities ahead—"if only patriotism be firmly united to patience and common sense." At the end, dropping his cane, he lifted his long arms as in a gesture of benediction, and with tears wetting his cheeks, said: "Will you accept this as the message of farewell from one who has given his blood and strength and heart in the service of Texas and has, humbly he believes, striven to follow the patriot's road!"

He sat down in a silence that endured until men could wipe their eyes and clear their throats. Then rose a roar that would not cease until he came again to the railing and bowed. Their tribute heartened

him; surely he could trust them to assure the realization of the vision he had conjured up for them: a Texas prosperous, growing constantly in power, at peace, doing justice to the Indians and so safe from their vengeful raids, and welcomed at last into the sisterhood of states of the Union as a bride adorned for her spouse.

Half sick with rage, Lamar finally had his chance to speak; but the crowd had no appetite for him. As he shouted out the details of the programme he proposed to follow—repudiation of Sam's "niggling policy of timidity parading as caution and an economy as small as it is useless" as well as "this long truckling to those contemptible Mexican and Indian elements that have served too long as sheeted ghosts to frighten the brave men of Texas"—they began trickling away. Only a scattered handful remained to hear his fervent shout, "The sword alone shall mark the boundaries of this Republic!" and his promise that every Indian should be removed from Texas soil.

"I promise you, my friends," he ended, "the aggressive government that every true son of Texas demands!"

"The hell you say," muttered a wearied listener, turning away to go to supper.

Worn and weary from six years of life in Texas, and a pressure that had tightened almost unbearably in the last three, Sam decided to make a visit to

Tennessee. He wanted to see Jackson again, now in retirement at the Hermitage, feel the grip of that loyal hand, and talk with him about the future of Texas. He wanted to stay with his brothers and sisters for a time, and lay flowers on the grave of his mother, who had died during the dark days of the retreat before Santa Anna.

And, more than anything else, he wanted to see 'Sabia!

Chapter X

NASHVILLE seemed surprisingly familiar to Sam. He had expected something different, greatly grown, old and sophisticated, elegantly civilized, perhaps disillusioned. He felt that he had been away for such a long time that the world of Tennessee must have radically changed. But only a few new houses, the streets a bit smoother perhaps, a few more carriages in which lovely women of the Eliza tradition lolled under sunshades, wearing tiny bonnets, a few more slaves in livery, a little more business activity along the river front, indicated the city's growth. The Inn was unchanged; MacGregor and Catron, seeming to have stepped back into his life from yesterday, welcomed him roughly and fervently.

Then he thought: "Why, of course, it's hardly more than half a dozen years since I was visiting here last, hardly more than ten since I was governor. There are hours that seem years, and years that span centuries!"

"Mac," he turned abruptly away from the Inn bar, "will you drive me out to the Hermitage and leave me?"

"Of course; but, Sam, you've been here only half an hour and have had but one drink!"

"Yes, but you know I've got to the point where the grip of an old friend's hand is worth more than meat and drink to me! And Jackson——"

At the dignified and familiar old mansion, its bricks a bit more weathered and with just a little, unfamiliar air of shabbiness, as if the flashing spirit that had ruled here for so long had begun to flag, MacGregor turned back. A very old slave opened to Sam, recognized him.

"Lawdy, it's Massa Sam! Yas, Suh, Ah knowed you—an' de Gineral, he's settin' in he's own ol' room waitin' foh you. Come in, Boy, come in. . . . God bress you, Suh. Ah'm jes' fine."

Andy met him at the door of the familiar room, put into his handshake a vigour that was surprising in one grown so thin and lined of face, looked up with a glance that sought to penetrate into the big man's soul. Pride and affection were in his eyes, and the tribute of one valiant fighter to another.

Sam was greatly moved by the frail figure tightly buttoned into the blue coat. The old aggressive pompadour of red had grown almost white—just a few streaks of ginger left in the scant thatch. He was seventy-two; he had lived a battling, furious sort of life, and he was nearly worn out. His eyes, when they sat down and Jackson's personal servant had renewed the fire and put cushions in his chair and a footstool for his slippered feet, seemed tired and brooding,

holding the shadow of sorrow that had never left them since Betty's death.

"You find me older, Sam; older than my years, I fear. But comfortable, and waiting for the call of my Saviour in peace. And you? Sam, you're bigger than ever—look as if you'd outlast the mountains! Of course, you *are* young; not fifty yet, are you?"

"Forty-six, Sir. But I can't think of you as withdrawn; there's fight in both of us."

"In you, my boy. You're in your prime. I'm pretty well used up, but you, Sam, if I wasn't a good church member now I'd say that you've got a hell of a lot of fight in you. And from what little I've heard from Texas in the last six months you're going to need it."

Jackson broke off to call his servant. "Fetch whisky, Cæsar. You'll excuse me, Sam, if I only touch my lips to a glass, but I've had to give it up. You'll stay with me for a time, as long as you can? Nonsense! Of course, you'll make my home your own. Cæsar!" and the old man gave orders to have Sam's bag and battered little travelling trunk fetched from the Inn. "Now we can talk.

"Tell me, Sam—as one ex-President to another! —just what's going on down there in that cockpit you call Texas? What's Lamar going to do?"

"Not as much as he plans, I hope, Sir. He's begun waving the sword and talking about invading Mexico. But the Texans don't want to fight now, they want to get on with their work. Lamar's like the crazy fool that put spurs on his hen and tossed it into the pit to

fight; all he'll get for his trouble will be a few squawks. But he can hurt Texas in other ways, destroy her credit and delay her material progress—and the process of fitting her to join the Union. The Indians, too, will suffer."

"That's going to hurt you, Sam, I know. Now about annexation. Of course, it's bound to come, though not in Lamar's term. But three years—it's not so long to wait, not at your age. If I could see it before I go!"

Sam asked for news of Eliza, found that he could speak her name without the old accent of bitterness, almost casually.

"She married Douglas, has children, and I hear that she's happy. Thank God, Sam, human beings are made of stout stuff and survive a lot of punishment. Sometimes I've wondered what all the strife and suffering is about. But—well, we've found it interesting, even the worst of it! They've lamed you down there; they've fought you and slandered you; they think perhaps they've got rid of you for good; yet I don't see you drooping under the blows. I had my battles in Washington, Sam, but they never downed me.

"Well, now you go out and take a look around, while I nap. You're to stay as long as you can, my boy!"

At the end of three days, Sam was off to Maryville, sorry to say good-bye to Jackson, but eager for the

change from the past, that was becoming unreal and shadowy, to the vital reality of Eusabia.

She opened her door, her eyes wide, a hand on her heart.

"I—I saw you coming, Sam." Her words were a rapid flutter of sound.

He stood for a moment looking down into her face, stricken by the sight of its pallor, the appearance of strain. Then he stepped inside, drew her close and whispered, "'Sabia, you tried to deceive me in your letter; you're not fat, or gray! My dear, you're more beautiful than ever—lovely, lovely Red Head." He laid his cheek on her hair, then swept the shining crown with his lips.

"Don't, Sam, or I'll cry!" She drew him into the sweet, wood-smoke tinted room, took his leaning face between her hands and smiled up into his anxious eyes. "I must tell you while I've still got the courage to speak of it, my dear: I'm under sentence of death. It's—please, my darling, let me say it—it's my heart. But it doesn't matter, now you're here. I've longed for you so, hoped you would come in time. You're here, and I'm happy, and—and that's all, Sammie." Her whisper was a sigh of ecstasy.

He gathered her up, carried her to a big chair in the sunshine that poured through a window, held her tight for a time, then looked at her face with intent, frightened eyes. "But, 'Sabia, you can't mean —you're not going to leave me now—not that way,

my dear! Not now that I've come for you, that I'm here to take care of you. 'Sabia—oh, my love, I'll never leave you again!"

She sighed happily, nestled close and close. How pitifully light she was! "No, never again, Sammie. My Sammie! And that's all that matters to me in this world or the next, forever and forever."

How could it be true that this vibrant, radiant creature was condemned? He questioned her as calmly as he could, trying to seem careless and unbelieving under his challenging smiles. But she said quietly that for more than a year the heart had been misbehaving and only a week ago the doctor had said——

"But, Sammie, let's not talk about it. I can't last much longer, but while I do I'm yours—utterly yours, my love."

"I'll go and find a preacher, 'Sabia, and we'll be married at once!"

"But—but Talahina?"

"Didn't I tell you—I meant to send you John Jolly's letter—she died—with her people, while I was so busy down there in Texas. It hurt me, 'Sabia——" He bent his head to her breast to hide his tears, strangely welling half for the dead and half for the living; then, " 'Sabia, you're all that matters now."

They sat silent for a long time, nearly motionless, only now and then her hand stroked the grizzled, graying crown of the great head pressing lightly against her breast. Then she spoke, in little, reflective,

happy snatches. "No, Sammie, I'll never leave you. I don't think I could now, dear. I've loved you so long, and been with you so little. It seemed always that you were going away. In body, Sammie. But all the time I felt you near me. How was that, I wonder? And always I felt that you never stopped loving me. Why did I feel that way, Sammie?"

" 'Sabia, dear, it was true, only I was a fool and wouldn't acknowledge the truth! But I know now, and," he lifted his head and cried out savagely, "God Himself shan't take you from me!"

"Oh, my dear!" She laid a hand on his mouth, shaken but smiling under the tear stains on her cheeks. "My wild Sammie! You haven't changed. Child and angry boy! Children, both of us, I think, Sammie—lost and crying out in the dark—oh, we wandered for such a long time. But now, we're home together, darling." She lay back in his arms, relaxed, a mist of happiness veiling her eyes.

Again the long silence, the mingling of spirits and souls in a swimming, unreal world of bliss untainted.

He roused, "Now, my dear, I must go for the parson."

"Not now, Sammie," she protested, whispering. "Wait until to-morrow, my love. Don't leave me now, even for an hour—not to-day. To-morrow, I'll stand up with you before a preacher, but I can't let you go in our first hours, after the time I've famished for you."

"No, 'Sabia," he kissed her ardently. "In all of

God's wide world there was never another woman like you, beloved!"

In the morning, he rode to the county clerk's office for a license, then to the parsonage to bid the preacher come that afternoon to Eusabia's home to marry them.

But when the parson came, he found that Eusabia had died an hour before.

She had gone out smiling, held tight in Sam's arms —smiling in that final agony to hearten her lover who was shaken, trembling, and for once in his life frightened in a fight that he knew was hopeless.

"Brother," the man of God touched Sam's bowed shoulders with a pitying hand, "it was the will of the Lord. Couldn't you say with me, 'O Lord, thy will be done?' "

Sam lifted his head, cried furiously, "Get out, damn you!" Then, when the horrified Reverend Mr. Lloyd backed away, he rushed after him, repentant. "I'm sorry I cursed you, Sir; I must be crazed by grief."

"I understand, of course. Do you wish—can I do anything further, before——?"

"Just this, parson: See that I am allowed to carry her in my arms to the grave, and lay her in the coffin; my hands must be the last to touch her."

"I—er—it is never done that way, Sir, but——"

"Arrange it," Sam said, and turned his back.

He had his way. At the cemetery where Eusabia's

mother lay confidently awaiting Gabriel's trumpet, he carried her, lightly as though she slept, to the open coffin beside the open grave. But he could not screw down the coffin lid. "Please, please," he whispered, turning to drop on his knees and cry out: "Surely, 'Sabia, there *is* a God to pity me. The ploughshare has driven over me, and I bleed!"

Chapter XI

DAZED, forlorn he went for promised visits to the houses of his sisters and his brothers. He was silent, listened attentively to their chatter of family life, their material affairs, the prosperity of Blount County and Roane County, flourishing new churches and schools; and on leaving he would have forgotten the names of his nieces and nephews! Over and over in his mind he kept repeating Jackson's words,

"Thank God, Sam, human beings are made of stout stuff and survive a lot of punishment!"

Oh, he'd have to survive! He must not follow that same easy road his brother Bob had taken, blot himself out with a pistol bullet. He couldn't go back just now to Texas, he was too tired and distraught. Perhaps—well, he would return to Nashville, there was good liquor at the Inn, and good friends to get drunk with! It was an old prescription for grief.

Fortunately, at the Inn he found Jimmie Lea, a blithe and warm-hearted man a bit younger than himself whose spirit needed no alcohol to stimulate it. And, "Sam," he put an arm firmly across his friend's shoulders, held him tight, and said bravely: "I'm going to say something you won't like. You're a damn fool to loaf around here! Drink ain't what

you need. I want you to come home with me to Alabama, ride with me, hunt quail with me, meet my wife and hold my kids on your knees, stay with folks that love you."

"Do I know your wife, Jimmie?" Sam asked.

"No, but you ought to remember my sister, Margaret. I used to fetch her to the state house sometimes when you were governor, and she was a little girl going to school here in Nashville. We'll have a grand party for you, Sam. We'll go to-morrow!"

"Well, Jimmie, all right!" Sam had responded to the other's generous, half-feminine affection.

It was even better at the Lea home than Sam had hoped. In the comfort and leisure and infectious cheerfulness of his friend's charming big house, in the welcome of Jimmie's lovely wife, friendly and naïvely proud of having as guest the "Big Father of Texas," in the merry tyranny of Jimmie's three children, Jimmie Junior with his first pony, Steve and his passionately loved and much-mauled setter "Sandy," and Anne with twice as many dolls as she had years —and Sam was made to memorize the names of fourteen—he was given little time to nurse his sorrow.

Into this houseful of bubbling, sane, lovable people the sister Margaret, now twenty-four, fitted perfectly. "Peggy," said Mrs. Lea, "makes us all feel like a triflin', no-account horde, but she loves us, an' she's so sweet!"

"Oh, General Houston, you mustn't believe one

word of that! I'm perfectly useless, an' Dolly Lea knows it."

"I prefer, Miss Lea," Sam said with a quite new twinkle in his eyes and something of the lightness of spirit he had absorbed from the family, "to believe what Anne says about you!"

"What does she say, Sir?"

"Ask her; she said I wasn't to tell!"

In the evening, Margaret played on the harp and sang, and her brother teased, "Peggy, you *have* got good arms."

"Meaning," she looked up with an adorable flash, "that my voice is awful! But you needn't listen, my angelic brother, unless you want to."

"If you don't continue, Miss Lea," Sam said, "it will be a vast disappointment to me!"

Soon Sam found himself riding over the sandy roads of the big plantation with Margaret, drawing from her bit by bit—and on her part quite unconsciously—the confession that he had been her childhood hero. Tales of his valour in the Creek campaign and of his swift rise to eminence in Tennessee, generously amplified by Jimmie, had fixed him firmly in her mind. He could not fail to see that his image had not shrunk in her imagination because of his Texas years, and her interest warmed and comforted him.

On one of their rides, before he decided that this idle and delightful lingering must come to an end, he spoke to her of Eusabia—of the black gulf that

had opened before him at her death. "I was lost in a fog, black and gray and cold. I thought I could never be warm again! I wanted to die. At first, I think it was only what Andrew Jackson said that saved me. Then Jimmie, God bless him, dragged me away from Nashville. And now I seem to have recovered courage. Oh, it's good to have friends!"

"Yes, I know, Sir; Jimmie told us—he's the dearest boy in the world. And," she hesitated for a moment before looking up to say courageously, "I thank you for honouring me with your confidence. I wish with all my heart that you may find happiness again."

He saw that she was greatly moved. "Miss Margaret, dear child, may I say that I hope *you* will always be happy, that life will give you all that you ask?"

She gave him a quick, rather frightened glance, tried to smile, whispered something he could not hear, then touched her horse with the crop and led him on a long gallop down the twisting, oak-bordered road.

He must get back to Texas, back to the cockpit where his ardent enemy Lamar was energetically fitting spurs to his fighting hens and parading them. The compelling item of news that sent Sam off was Lamar's formal proclamation concerning Boles's band of Texas Cherokees, "They will never be permitted to establish a permanent and independent jurisdiction within the inhabited limits of this government. Their final removal is certain, whether it be

done by friendly negotiation or by the violence of war."

Back at Nacogdoches, his friends of the Redlands gave Sam a hasty summary of the actions and plans of the man who seemed intent upon tearing down all that he had so laboriously built.

"Lamar," said one, "is headin' Texas toward ruin. The darned fool gets a new idea every day, and the last one's always the worst."

"What of Boles's Cherokees?" Sam demanded. "Has he moved against them yet?"

"Oh, he's dropped them for the moment. He's gettin' ready to send the rag-tag army he's got together against the Comanches. They'll go out there, try to chase them wild devils off the grazin' grounds that rightfully belong to 'em, get licked an' stir 'em up till they're mad as hornets and set in to spreadin' rapine and murder all through the western settlements."

"Before that," said another, "he started an expedition to capture Santa Fé—started it off along that long road the Mexicans call the *jornado del muerto,* and it'll be in truth a road of death if I don't miss my guess, in spite of the fact they're dragging along a cannon with the magic inscription 'Mirabeau B. Lamar' on its breech."

"And before *that,*" a third man recalled, "Lamar sent off to Vera Cruz what he called a personal ambassador to pave the way for a later good-will visit from himself and hint that Texas and Mexico might

be brought closer together and secured in the eternal bonds of amity if Lamar married into the ruling family down there. But Mexico wouldn't even receive his man!"

The first man took up the tale again: "Oh, he's got big notions! One was to start a national bank to save the currency that's dropped in value already till you've got to pay a thousand dollars for a ten-dollar horse. But he couldn't tell 'em just how the bank was to work that miracle, an' so he dropped it."

"To take up another big notion," said the second man in turn. "That was to build a great national highway east and west clear across Texas that would be sure to bring in ten thousand new settlers with plenty of money. But he couldn't figure a way to pay for the work, so we still struggle through sand and 'dobe mud."

"That highway scheme," number three of Sam's informants explained, "was only a part of the plan Lamar and his friends are working on now to get control of a lot of land out north and west from San Antonio, then start a new town to be called Austin and move the capital to it. He don't seem to relish the notion of the government doing business at a place called Houston!"

"I can understand that!" Sam laughed.

"But look here, Sam," and the Redlander's voice became grimly grave, "the crazy man's got to be fought by the best men we've got, and in every way it's possible to fight him. We've been thinking you

ought to run for Congress; there's a special election for the House of Representatives coming in this district, and if you'd stand——"

"Of course, I'll stand."

Before he could take his seat, however—he had been elected without opposition—the shocking tragedy of the Texas Cherokees was played.

A commission, escorted by six hundred soldiers, marched under orders to "treat with the Indians for the disposal of their Texas lands." At the edge of the little reservation, they camped and summoned Boles. Their notion of "treating" was to make a peremptory demand that the Indians should at once get off the land which they had occupied in peace for more than twenty years, which they had made fruitful and which had been guaranteed to them by treaty. Boles showed the members of the commission the very paper which he and Big Mush and others had signed with Sam Houston, taking it out of a small tin box he carried at the end of a buckskin thong around his neck.

Boles was told that his paper was now worthless. He was given three days to get his band on the move "or suffer the consequences." He asked for a chance to consult his headmen, and rode away. In two days, his son came to say that the old man—he was eighty-three—had realized the hopelessness of further pleas and had given orders to the band to pack and move across the Neches River off the reservation. Already some were under way. Leaving the commission and

the soldiers, Boles's son returned to his father and the Cherokees with word that the Texans would make no further move without notice.

But then fresh contingents of soldiers, hearing that an Indian fight was in prospect, came hurrying and demanded their chance to "git a shot at them damn' redskins!"

Word was sent to Boles that removal across the river and away from the reservation would not do; the Indians must remove from Texas soil; and the Texas troops were following their messenger to enforce the order!

Only then did Boles comprehend the truth—that the expedition meant to harry them until they resisted and then indulge their lust for slaughter. He knew, as did the Texans who were being paraded by excited and boastful officers, that the Cherokees could not outrun the whites unless they abandoned their women, children, and old men; and since they were civilized human beings they could not do that. Boles asked of his councillors:

"Do we run away and get shot in the back, or stay and die like brave men?"

He knew what the answer would be; and to the Texans the word was sent that after crossing the Neches River, getting off the reservation as they had agreed, the Cherokees would stand.

Boles did what he could to make it a fight, placed the helpless of his band well behind his proposed line, sought for his warriors—less than two hundred men

inadequately armed and long unused to warfare—what shelter the flat prairie afforded. Mounted on his gentle little "paint" horse, he rode up and down the line exhorting his men to hold out to the end. "We can die, and let it be facing those madmen!"

Young John Reagan, of the commission, told of the battle that followed:

"It lasted two hours. We had six men killed and thirty-six wounded. When at last the Indian line was broken and the warriors who survived were driven back, Chief Boles was the last to leave the field. His horse had been shot down, and he had a bullet through the thigh. As he started to hobble off, he was shot in the back by Henry Connor, afterward Major Connor! He walked forward a little, fell, rose to a sitting position facing us, immediately in front of the company with which I was.

"I had witnessed his dignity and manliness in council, his devotion to his tribe and his courage in battle. Wishing to save his life, I ran toward him. As I approached from one direction, my captain, Robert Smith, come from another with pistol drawn. I said, 'Captain, don't shoot him!' but as I spoke he fired, shooting the Chief through the head.

"That night we could hear the hum and bustle of their camp, and the next morning they were gone."

So Sam heard the story. Gone, the remnant of the band, to death chants of the women, back to their kin on the Arkansas, leaving because they had to the blood-stained, stiffening body of brave old Boles on

the field, with the treaty signed "Sam Houston" still in the tin box about the wrinkled neck. Lamar had carried out at least one of his promises, *"Their final removal is certain!"*

Sam was sick with fury—physically sick. It was one of those horrors that are commonly shown to men only in the worst nightmares; and trembling, gagging, he cursed Lamar and the bullies who had slaughtered his friends. Growing calm, he swore that he would not cease to harry them as long as he had strength to avenge this foul stain on his personal honour.

Going up to the capital as a Representative, he put himself at the head of the administration's enemies. Day and night, coolly, shrewdly, he organized the opposition, harassed Lamar and the Cabinet, defeated their pet measures by the power of his words, by promises of rewards to men when he should again be President, for he announced loudly that he meant to fill that office again. His first term ended, the Redlanders sent him back again; and in the closing days of Lamar's administration, when financial chaos was a reality and an indifferent meal cost five hundred dollars in Texas currency, when it was proposed in the House that it should adjourn *sine die* and abandon the ship of state in the face of sedition in Texas and the ominous threats of an outraged Mexico, when European governments had drawn aside because they could no longer deal with the flighty and distracted Lamar, Sam got up and roared, "Get back to your seats, and listen!"

They subsided, and he limped out into the aisle.

"If you vote on that motion," he cried, "you will brand yourselves as worse cowards than any 'Yellow Belly' that ever infested Texas! This is the moment for coolness and common sense, and patient examination of every resource it is possible to marshal for the Republic's salvation. Stick to your work. Be men. The state of Texas has been desperate before, and may be again, but hopeless? Never!"

At the end of his speech, he put a motion of his own, the very calm, prosaic "I now move that this House do adjourn until to-morrow morning at the usual hour." No one voted against it.

To men who crowded about him afterward, he swore:

"By the eternal God, Lamar and his crew cannot ruin Texas while I live and have the power to raise my voice against them! They've blackened her name and stained her honour until she lies prostrate and defiled in the sight of the world. But she will survive. She must redeem her name, meet her obligations, so that Texans can hold up their heads again. We will wipe out that crew at the next election, rub their noses in their own dirt. Then we can begin building once more a country that we can love and speak of without shame!"

The Congress survived, ended its session. Nominations were called for President and other state offices, for a new congress. One convention was held, only one; Sam Houston was made its choice for President.

The election was a mere formality; hot-headed men had been heard to say with deadly seriousness, "We'll ride out of the country on a rail any damned son of a b—— that undertakes to beat him!"

From the Alabama Leas came enthusiastic words of congratulation; even little Anne added her dear scrawl, "dere uncl sam i lov you very much an i hav namd my new doley for you." Margaret said: "We're all so proud of you! You remember Horatio, who was your servant while visiting us? When we told him you were once more to be President of Texas, he laughed and said, 'God bress dat boy, he sho' whooped 'em agin'! Oh, I do pray God to give you strength and wisdom to meet the heavy tasks I know will be laid upon you!"

That and Jackson's brief, crabbed note, ending, "To my last breath, Sam, I am with you!" were like trumpet calls to action!

Chapter XII

THE words of his second inaugural speech had hardly died on the air when Sam was compelled to deal with the very serious menace from below the Rio Grande. Santa Anna, reëstablished once more as the supreme power in Mexico, had been goaded to an effort of retaliation by the Lamar expedition against Santa Fé —even though it had met disaster at San Miguel and its survivors languished in prison—and also by Lamar's equally futile gesture when he sent the infinitesimal Texas navy to support Yucatan's feeble revolutionary outbreak.

He at once recalled the navy from its meddling, but before his action could be notified to Mexico, some of Santa Anna's soldiers had crossed the river into Texas. In the general alarm that followed, the unceasing, savage attacks on Sam, and the plotting instigated by his enemies were dropped. But so low had the name and fortune of Texas sunk in the eyes of the outside world that his appeal to the United States for men, money, and arms brought only seven hundred unarmed half-vagabond adventurers, and the sum of five hundred dollars!

At the capital there was a recrudescence of the spirit of panic made so familiar to Sam in the perilous

days of '36. Without waiting for his call, members of Congress rushed to hold a special session. They passed a resolution declaring war on Mexico. They conferred on Sam dictatorial powers. Unable to appropriate nonexistent money for defence, they voted to set aside for financing the campaign ten million acres of public land.

Calmly, Sam vetoed these measures. Again he pointed out that Texas wanted no dictator. The declaration of war could amount to no more than a meaningless bluff, as without an army Texas could not go to war. As for the ten million acres of land, no one could be found to exchange dollars for it. "If, however," he concluded his message, "Congress finds the means to carry out a campaign, I am willing to lead the army myself if necessary."

Thus he called that bluff!

Then he took the only practical step possible by sending a long and formal letter of protest to Santa Anna—forwarding at the same time copies to Washington, London, and Paris—in which he reviewed the Mexican Napoleon's course since setting off from Texas to Washington and thence to freedom, reminding him in solemn terms that in sending soldiers across the Rio Grande he was violating his acknowledged obligations. He assured Santa Anna that not only would Texas resist to the last man, but that every civilized nation, outraged by his perfidy, would send aid. He demanded the instant release of the Texans still held as prisoners at Santa Fé.

Another bluff, perhaps; but the point was that Santa Anna had once been shown Sam Houston's power to meet a desperate situation and win over incredible odds. Besides, he had not lost his liking for the big Texan, or his belief in his word. He sent a messenger to say that Mexico's honour was satisfied by the recall of the Texas navy, that his troops would withdraw, and that orders would go to Santa Fé at once for the release of the prisoners. He hoped that cordial relations between the countries would never again be interrupted.

Sam acknowledged the Mexican's gesture in warm-hearted words, then plunged into the prolonged and desperate struggle to restore the Republic's credit through loans from hesitant and skeptical bankers, through a public-lands policy that would make the vast unoccupied square miles of Texas worth buyers' gold, and by enforcing tax laws which the Lamar administration had allowed to become dead letters.

With equal vigour and persistence, he pushed the scheme for the annexation of Texas to the American Union. In the hope of stirring Washington to action, he maintained a voluminous "secret" correspondence with London and Paris, the gist of which he contrived to have communicated to the Secretary of State of the United States. In these papers, he urged the importance of treaties that would strengthen Texas politically and commercially; and hinted that a strong rival of the United States on her very flank ought to be useful to Europe.

It was a game worth playing in spite of its dangers. He meant to push it to such lengths that the United States Congress would be convinced that if annexation was not soon accomplished Texas might be lost forever, and to force even the bitterest antislavery man to feel that he could not afford to let his scruples stand in the way of the Union's logical growth. Sam's rather conspicuous friendship and frequent association with Captain Elliott, the British Chargé, gave his enemies the excuse to call him disloyal and accuse him of plotting to throw Texas in England's lap. In the big diplomatic game he was playing, he did not choose too convincingly to deny it.

Talk of revolution broke out afresh, stimulated by the Lamar faction; hot-bloods individually began inviting him to meet them in duels, sometimes three or four in a day. Their challenges at first amused, then bored him. To the first he solemnly objected that he could not accept "because there is to be but one second, and that the man who brought the challenge." One must observe the niceties of the code! He wrote to the second challenger, mockingly, "You dare suggest a meeting on Sunday morning!" and to the third, "Sir, I hear that you are a good Christian and had your child baptised last week." Then, insolently, he notified another that he never "fought downhill," meaning that he would not meet an inferior in a duel. Then he began passing the defis to his secretary, with the smiling comment, "Tell the

angry gentleman his application to shoot me will be filed and taken up in its turn."

The smoke of agitation against Sam grew dense, then actually broke into flame. Insurrectionary groups met, organized, and began drilling for the promised *coup d'état*. Whereupon he issued a call for the state militia, rode out of Austin to call meetings at the principal settlements, harangue them in fiery speeches, confirm their allegiance by pouring out upon them from the deep well of patriotism in his own heart a courage to stand loyal through these difficult days. The response was so quick, so menacing to the revolutionists, that the cabals dissolved. The stout men who cocked their ears when Sam spoke banged their whisky glasses down on the tavern bars and repeated the threat:

"By God, if them fellows go too fur Old Sam'll take'em over his knees an'spank their hindsides pink!"

Peace and order restored, with the government functioning smoothly and the long recess of Congress ahead, Sam announced his intention of going to Alabama "for a rest." Not even his nearest friends suspected that the visit meant the culmination of a romance.

Yet such it was. In the correspondence with Margaret Lea that had continued through the stress and turmoil he had found an increasing comfort and a firm rock of support. Cheerful, sympathetic, utterly

confident of his greatness, her letters passed from lively pictures of life at the plantation and gossip of the family and neighbours to warm and courageous responses to his appeals for affection. He wrote of his trials impulsively—as he said, "like a whipped schoolboy!" He told her that her happy letters were like draughts of cool spring water to feverish lips; and, grown bolder: "No greater happiness could come to me than to have you, dear Margaret, at my side with that belief in me which you confess and the devotion of which I know you are capable!"

To that proposal she had responded shyly, but her letter left no doubt in his mind that she loved him deeply. Then he felt it necessary to say: "Dear one, you know that I could never again experience the burning passion I poured out upon her who so bitterly disappointed me, or ever forget the long union of spirit with the one who died in my arms."

And Margaret: "My dear, I could not love you as well as I do if I did not know that your heart has been torn. I know that suffering has not deadened you. God willing, I ask no other or more precious privileges than to stand by your side and try to believe I am helpful."

Young, lovely, sweet she was, and pious. God was as real to her as was Sam.

She returned with him as his wife, radiant, fairly shimmering with interest in the new scene, delighting Sam's friends with her spirit. She was tolerant, expecting perfection in no man, for she had known too

well the human failings of her dear brother and his intimates. She wept when Sam broke forth on the occasional sprees that seemed to be required as a blowing off of excess steam, but she never let him see her tears; and only to God, on her knees in their bedroom, did she confide her hope that she might win him to her faith and to membership in the church.

Joyously she undertook to make the crude executive mansion a home of refinement. She said to Sam with a laugh, "As soon as I get the fleas and rats, and the smell of onions, out of this house, I want to refurnish it, put up curtains, and have some genteel parties!"

"Good! Margaret, you've hit upon one of the reasons for my dejection. A man that lives like a pig——"

"Sh-h-h!" She kissed him, then, "I'll make out the list of things we need, Sam." The next day he sent to the Texas consul at New Orleans an order for a piano (for Margaret played the piano as well as the harp she had brought along from Alabama), a smart carriage and furniture suitable for a gentleman's home. Concerning the furniture calico, he made a prudent note, "Choose none that exhibit designs of turkey gobblers, peacocks, bears, elephants, wild boars, or stud horses! Vines, flowers, or like figures of taste you can send."

In her gentle way, Margaret had as much firmness as Sam himself, and infinitely more tact. She set out to cure him of swearing, not by rebukes, but by

ridiculous imitations that made him laugh. She encouraged his love of fine clothes, showed herself at evening parties in silks and satins from New York or Philadelphia, playing the harp, sometimes at Sam's insistence reciting poems she had written—but never those verses she made in praise of her Sam. To her guests she served mild negus, and cakes which she recommended with a smile and the remark, "I know they're good because I made them myself!"

He was her constant preoccupation, her unfailing joy. He was tender and violent, moody, sunnily serene, humble, boastful, rampant, and coarse when he was drinking heavily, fastidious in words and appetite when he was normal. He had fits of penitence when, shyly and shamefacedly, he held her in his arms, looked down into her clear black eyes and wondered:

"Margaret dear, I don't see how you manage to put up with me, I swear I don't!"

"Put up with you! Oh, my dear! I love you, Sam, and I thank my Lord every day that I am your wife, privileged to stand at your side."

"Through thick or thin, good or evil report! Ah, you have the real soldier spirit, and I'm a damn' lucky man, Peg!"

"Yes, 'mighty damn' lucky,' Sam," and she smiled wryly over the words.

"Peg! Don't mock me; I meant to say just lucky, darling." They both laughed at that.

She was indeed a comforter and a shedder of peace and happiness. In the turmoil of his job, she helped

to establish an island of serenity to which his spirit had happy access. Threats of assassination, and these were frequent, he scorned, sitting in the summer evenings at the open windows with Margaret in view of every passer, tantalizing those fevered, crack-brained fanatics who could not quite make up their minds to put a bullet through his head from ambush.

When Margaret bore him his first fine son, his happiness richened and deepened. Impulsively, he went off with his friends to celebrate the event in the traditional way. Returning to her after a riotous night unsteady and wild of eye, he found that for a moment she lost control of herself and wept. Overcome by remorse, he knelt by her bed, muttering, "My dear, forgive me!"

"Kiss me, Sam," she smiled, "and say no more. My dear!" Her white hand on his thick, graying hair was to him as a priest's absolution. "We'll call the boy Sam, and, oh, my husband, I will pray that he may grow up to be such a man as you!"

The difficult, many-angled struggle for annexation went stubbornly on. In long and plausible letters to Sir Robert Peel, Prime Minister of England, and to Monsieur Guizot of the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, the President of Texas endeavoured to secure their aid in the making of a permanent treaty of peace with Mexico and in forcing Mexico to recognize Texas—even to the extent of "making war upon her according to the rights established and universally recognized by civilized nations." For let either England

or France make an aggressive move as the ally of Texas, and the United States would have to act!

As further bait for those canny foreign ministers, Sam ran the lines—in imagination—of a vastly extended Texas, even taking in the Oregon region. "England," he said in a prolonged night talk with his old friend and former aide Hockley, whom he had made his Secretary of War, "would rather have us take it than that it should fall to the United States."

"Mr. President," Hockley grinned, "are you sure you haven't caught the big head—or what I heard an eastern college fellow call the 'delusion of grandeur' —from Lamar? How would you acquire all this territory? By the sword?"

"Oh, it's just a dream, Hockley. But, Sir, it's a damn' pretty dream, and I ain't sure they won't believe in it over yonder in London and Paris. See," he began pushing a large finger northward on the map that lay between them, "we run our present western boundary up to the forty-sixth degree of latitude, then west to the Pacific, south to latitude 29° and back to the mouth of the Rio Grande. We've not only got the Oregon Territory, a long Pacific seaboard as well as our Gulf coast, Upper and Lower California, the barrier of the Rocky Mountains removed, but the rich provinces of Sonora, Chihuahua, and Santa Fé. These, Hockley, if I *were* using the language of Lamar, I might say await the march of the Anglo-Saxon feet of Texas supported by the troops of England and France!

"I can't use such language, but maybe our envoys abroad could scatter hints that would help. And I'll have Terrill"—he was Sam's Secretary of State—"instruct our men in Washington that Sam Houston's dreaming of imperial grandeur, and ask them to spread the alarm. We'll give 'em something big to mill over!"

It was a great conception. Not only was it milled over at Washington by excited statesmen, but it was not long before the Texas Chargé at Paris sent word that France and England would unite in a protest against the annexation of Texas to the United States.

Wonderful news for Sam! He sent it along at once to his official negotiators at Washington, with the solemn warning, "Never has the situation of Texas been so critical since the 21st of April, 1836! If the government of the United States does not act immediately, and consummate the work of annexation, Texas is lost forever to them."

So far had he pushed his play against the rabid antislavery elements of the United States Congress that Adams and his zealots ceased shrieking opposition to annexation in the very real peril of a war with England. Success came at the end of Sam's term; in fact, Anson Jones, his successor and old friend, as well as loyal supporter, actually had the honour of leading Texas "adorned as a bride for her spouse" into the Union. Another of Sam's old Tennessee

friends, James Knox Polk, as President of the United States, welcomed the bride.

In ten years he had accomplished the mission Old Hickory had encouraged him to undertake, and Sam's satisfaction would have been complete if the old warrior had only lived to see its consummation. "But he knew it was coming, Peg," he said to his wife, then, "I'm prouder of Jackson's friendship and belief in me than of anything else I've done or ever will do. There was a man, my dear!"

And to herself, Margaret cried, "Here stands another!" They were back in the Redlands, on a farm Sam had acquired, living in a modest log farmhouse built on a swell of prairie from which islands of fine trees and shimmering small lakes met the eye.

Ten years of uphill struggle to win an empire for the United States, ten years of slow rebuilding of a man. The end was worth while.

Chapter XIII

SAM was now fifty-three, thick of body, shaggy of hair and side whiskers, still walking with a limp. Heavy eyebrows drew down in a sort of scowl over stabbing gray eyes as he looked at a man in talking, eyes that lighted with a humorous gallantry when he paid compliments to women, or swung them a turn or two on the dance floor. Margaret was delighted with him in this new mood of happy serenity, proud of his popularity with men and women alike. When Miss Hamilton, a distant cousin in Virginia, sent him her album and begged him to write in it something that showed he remembered her, he complied:

"Remember thee?
Yes, lovely girl,
While faithful memory holds its seat,
Till this warm heart in dust is laid,
And this wild pulse shall cease to beat,
No matter where this bark be tost
On life's tumultuous, stormy sea—
My anchor gone, my rudder lost—
Still, Cousin, I will think of thee!"

And Margaret was enchanted with the lines, "Sam, they're ever so much better than anything I've ever done!"

In quite another strain, reminiscent of the Sam of tavern bars, he wrote to another woman relative whom he had urged to remove from Tennessee to Texas, where her influence "toward stability and sobriety" was needed, meeting her flippant retort, "Surely you haven't forgotten the precedent of the Romans and the Sabine women!" with this: "I have no doubt that if we sent up and brought to Texas a few shiploads of Yankee onion-fed girls, they would thank us for the rape!"

He announced that he was through with public life. As governor, Anson Jones was proving as sane and able as he had shown himself to be as president in the closing days of the Republic. Margaret bore him a second son, whom he named Andrew Jackson —there were to be seven children in all—and nothing pleased him better than to limp about his farm, planning improvements, or ride off toward San Jacinto Bay where he had his eye on another plantation that, some day, he hoped the boys would enjoy.

To the friends who came to him in his retirement for counsel, he talked with a deliberate slowness and an irritating vagueness after he had told them firmly, "What I set out to do I have accomplished. I know there's work yet to be done to strengthen the state, but others must do it. You let Farmer Sam alone with his cotton and his turnips!"

But when they stayed on, persistent in the attempt to draw him out on some man's candidacy for the Legislature or the United States Congress, he turned

the talk to past days. One of his visitors wrote at this time:

"It is a very late hour of the night, or rather an early hour of the morning, so late, or early, that it's not worth while going to bed. I am sitting at General Houston's centre table, and he has just left me. He is a tremendous talker once he gets started; I never realized before how forceful, accomplished, and agreeable a talker he is. His memory is marvellous; it retains with extraordinary clearness the least details of scenes he has witnessed, heard, or read about. In our hours and hours of talk he lived over his life in Tennessee, his Indian years, the San Jacinto compaign, his talks with Santa Anna—a curious mixture of a man, he says, military genius and popinjay, merciless tyrant and impulsive friend. But not a word could I extract concerning the matter I hoped to discuss with him!"

Fine, flavorous talk it was, and Sam enjoyed flashing those pictures from memory. Margaret would sit up as long as she could, listening, then kiss him, press his big head a moment against her breast and say: "Now, Sam, don't stay up too late. Mr. Williamson"—if it happened to be the joyous "Three-Legged Willie" with his wooden stump supporting a distorted lower leg who sat with them—"won't ever come again unless you let him have his rest!"

"Ma'am," the guest would protest, bowing over her hand as she said good night, "a man can sleep any time, but he can't hear Sam Houston talk more than once in a 'coon's age!"

Then back to their chairs, with whisky and water between them—more water by far than whisky for Sam now, for under Margaret's tactful and unceas-

ing pressure he had all but given up strong drink—and:

"I remember the old stagecoaches that used to run out of Nashville, smelling of brandy, stogies, peppermints, gingerbread, and sausages. They were a feast for the nose, my boy, and mine was big enough to take it all in! The fellows sitting outside used to sing the good old songs; one was 'Consarnin' Molly Edwards an' her lover Peter King.' Rich! . . . Once a Jew peddler unlimbered a music box that played 'Yankee Doodle,' and we all joined in.

"There was a quack doctor that got elected to the Tennessee legislature, and the first thing he did was to introduce a bill, 'No quacks except those already licensed shall be permitted to sue for their pay'!"

Then the wandering talk got upon the Cherokees, and Sam recalled his meeting with Sequoyah, the son of a wandering German trader and an Indian mother, who invented the Cherokee alphabet and created a new written language:

"He came to my camp one day in Roane County, Tennessee, when I was on an inspection tour as major general of militia, a no-account looking lame fellow. The Indians had named him Sequoyah, meaning 'Hog-in-a-Pen,' because he had to stay at home so much on account of his lame foot. When he said he could read the 'talking leaf,' a paper sent from any distance by his daughter that he'd taught to write Cherokee, some of the old Indians wanted to try him for witchcraft. But when he proved his boast, the

tribe gave him an annuity and sent him out to teach his wonderful knowledge to all the people.

"They tell me the whole tribe learned to read. They have a newspaper printed in type the missionaries had cast back East; and they've got a lot of books and religious leaflets printed too. And there's many a white man that can't tell B from a bull's foot who still calls these people savages, not fit to associate with, and wants to see them prodded off the earth!"

Another sip, a slow back-tilting of the great head, a chuckle, then:

"I remember an Eastern preacher that came out to Houston toward the end of the first year of the Republic, and lit into us for a proper pack of savages. He refused to dine with me because he was afraid I'd get drunk and shock him! We got him to go with us once on a steamer ride to Galveston, and we gave him a taste of what he called 'bacchanalian revelry,' stripping down to our shirts and breeches and reeling every time we passed him.

"I liked better a plucky little French priest that came to me about that same time and said, 'Mon-seer, you have here a truly wretched little town, infested with fleas, ants, and Methodists!' And damn' if he wasn't about right."

But Sam could not be allowed to bury himself thus on the farm, lost in the memory of the past. The call to serve, this time as one of the first senators of the state at Washington, became too insistent to be ig-

nored. He regretted going, mainly because Margaret felt that she ought not to make the long journey and live in lodgings with little Sam and baby Andrew; and he would be lonely, except for Rusk, who was chosen as the other senator. His heart was in Texas.

For twelve years, however, he sat for Texas in the Senate and fought for the measures he believed essential to the health of the nation. He attended the sessions with regularity, served on committees, listened with patience to innumerable long-winded orations as he sat rather humped over a waste basket whittling bits of soft pine into hearts, darts, crosses, horses, and Indians to be given to the children of his friends. He was a marked figure in his favourite long blue coat, tigerskin waistcoat, gray trousers, with a short cloak of fine blue broadcloth lined with scarlet thrown across the back of his chair and a tall beaver hat underneath. When he spoke in the Senate, members kept their seats, for he spoke out of a ripened wisdom, a vast experience, a profound knowledge of men and motives, and a rich background of historical achievement.

As always, he strove for the saner and juster treatment of the Indians, and as always strove vainly. Ka-la-nu—Jolly had been right in naming him after the bird that was destined to fail in bringing fire to the people! On the great issues of his two terms, however, he made himself felt. His speech in support of the Missouri Compromise measure echoed through the nation; and later, when the Kansas-

Nebraska Bill was offered, to break down that measure which had apparently saved the country from a tragic sectional war over slavery, he opposed it with such shrewd persistence and eloquence that politicians began to consider him seriously as a likely successor of President Pierce. About that time, a Mr. Evans published a highly laudatory biography, ending by quoting an appeal by certain Eastern Democrats to nominate Sam in defiance of the party's national convention "which has become the instrument of intriguing demagogues for their own aggrandizement!"

Sam refused to take such talk seriously; to a Virginia friend who urged him to come to Richmond and publicly refute the slanders being circulated about him by an old enemy, he answered curtly, "Virginia has never done anything for me, and I will not trouble to conciliate her." In the hotel room he occupied in Washington hung a conspicuous sign, "My bedtime is nine o'clock!"

The years with Margaret had refined his speech, abated his temper. He was handsomer than ever, gentler. He gave up strong drink altogether, became an ardent advocate of prohibition. At the National Capital, he began going regularly to a Baptist church, whittling through the Sunday service but listening attentively in order to write a summary of the sermon to Margaret. One day he wrote that he had seen the light, felt the call to his manhood in the text, "Better is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a

city." He was resolved to join his wife in the Faith; and on his next journey home, at sixty-one, he was led into the November-chill waters of Mill Creek and immersed by the Reverend Mr. Burleson.

Some days later, he was riding with the preacher when his horse stumbled and threw him forward on its neck. Jerking angrily at the reins, he swore, "God damn a stumbling horse!"

"Brother Houston!" Burleson rebuked sternly.

"I'm sorry, Sir!" Sam was overcome with remorse. "What can I do to make amends?"

"Pray to the Lord to forgive you."

Instantly Sam dismounted, handed his reins to the preacher, knelt by the roadside and asked to be forgiven his impiety.

As the end of his second term as Senator approached, he consented to stand as candidate for governor. He didn't want the office; his campaign was colourless, half-hearted; in his mood of zealous piety, he refrained from the familiar rough and tumble of the Texas hustings, cut out the mighty oaths and devastating epithets he had known so well how to hurl at his enemies. His speeches—the few he made—were mild, milk-and-water utterances over which men first yawned, then shook their heads and said, "The old man has lost his juice, he's failing!" And the other man was elected.

Following this defeat, the new legislature, hostile,

sent another man in his place as Senator to Washington!

This double defeat stung Sam. For forty years, ever since as a young lawyer he had stood for district attorney in Tennessee, the people had never before failed to back him. He finished out his senatorial term and came home—but this time not to settle down into the bucolic peace he loved. He had to wipe out the stain, show Texas that the old lion could still roar, still devour the sweet meat of an enemy!

He was indefatigable during the nearly three years before the next election for governor, bringing to his log-cabin home every man of influence he could count upon, travelling about the state as he had done before the revolution. When the campaign opened, he went from meeting to meeting dressed in a long linen ulster, a shirt open to his navel, revealing the matted hair on his chest, thick as a buffalo's mane, his feet in disreputable low shoes and sagging socks, leaning on a stout knotted cane. Again he was the Tribune of the People; limping across a platform, mutely reminding his auditors of the wound received at San Jacinto, his eyes flashing out over the crowd, he set out mercilessly to "take the hide off" the members of the opposition ticket.

He knew them all, knew intimately their history, had stored in his retentive memory every incident of their past; and with an unholy glee that delighted the Texans he proceeded to drag skeleton after skeleton into the light.

"Oldham?" he would begin in a tone of gentle inquiry. "Let me tell you about him. No," and he would rouse to a sudden burst of scorn, "you'd better ask him yourselves why he stole those bank books up yonder in Arkansas and sunk them in the White River!

"Then there's Steiner. Steiner's a murderer. He murdered Major Arnold. They've got another murderer on their ticket, too—Wiggletail. No, I beg your pardon, Wigfall, a man that can outlie Ananias himself. And Marshall? A vegetarian, he won't eat meat; one drop of his blood would freeze a frog! . . . Terrill? He used to be my friend. He used to be so many things! A Whig in Missouri, though he says he's a Democrat now. He wants to be a judge. A damn' pretty judge he'd make, running around the state slandering a man old enough to be his grandfather!

"This is the pack that calls itself the democracy of Texas. They've got up a paper, and signed their names to it, that calls me a traitor to Texas." He would pause, raise his hands conspicuously to draw on a pair of gloves, then extract a paper from the sagging pocket of his ulster. "Here it is," and he would cry scornfully, "it's too dirty to handle without gloves!" He would fling it down, repeat: "It calls *me* traitor, who in defence of Texas moistened her soil with my blood! My friends, the only insult I would resent from that gang would be their praise!"

Men yelled with delight at such hammer strokes.

Here was the Sam they knew and loved. Let his sneering enemies say, "There are two things that are always sure to bring out a Texas crowd—the circus and Sam Houston!" He got the votes, was triumphantly elected.

In the after-calm, when the notification committee came to his home, finding him on the porch in slippers, waving a fan of turkey feathers and with a huge tin cup of spring water on the table beside him, he was different. He spoke to them earnestly and gravely: "Gentlemen, I hardly know whether to thank you or to ask for your sympathy. An issue looms that lies heavy on the hearts of thoughtful men. I pray God for the wisdom and the strength to guide Texas through the crisis."

The issue was secession. Postponed by the Compromise of '50, and again in '54, its sombre shadow had once more fallen across the land. Buchanan, sitting in the White House, where Sam might have been if he had taken more seriously the political surveys made by his admirers in '56, was helpless to avert the storm raised in the South by the Abolitionists' aggressions. Sam might have displayed a firmer hand, but he could hardly have altered the course of history. Lincoln's election, his sadly spoken but final, "The Union cannot endure half slave and half free," sounded the inevitable call to arms.

Secession was the only issue of significance. Not long after his inauguration as governor, Sam received the call to the conference of Southern states to con-

sider it; and by that time he knew that it was inevitable. It was the time for making the most momentous decision of his life. His friends said, "Of course you will go, or appoint delegates with instructions to secede; there can be no doubt as to the sentiment of the people of Texas!"

But out of the wisdom that the years had brought him, from his long and passionate devotion to the Union into which he had laboured so long to lead Texas, from his knowledge of the power and resources of the North, he drew another conclusion. "Margaret," he said with the pallor on his deep-lined face that betrayed his agony at what must seem his desertion of his people, "I could not meet my God without shame if I should do aught to further this madness!"

Then to his friends and to the legislature he tried to make his reasons convincing. "Slavery is not an issue with us in Texas. Our future is not bound up in the question of whether the blacks shall continue to be serfs or become freemen. Slave or free, we are certain to prosper. But I must reiterate, in the most solemn words, that no state can have rights paramount to those of the United States. Remember this: for eight years we struggled to have Texas admitted to the Union. Now we must abide with the Union!"

And again: "Secession will lead to the bitterest warfare the world has ever known, and it can have but one end, the defeat and humiliation of the seceding states. I cannot, I will not, commit Texas to this

folly, even though I were certain that to-night an assassin's bullet should be the reply to my decision."

This was no idle defiance. His refusal to heed the call to the secession conference had roused excited men to ask dramatically, "Will not some Texas Brutus arise to rid his country of this hoary-headed traitor!" And other more personal and dire warnings had come to him. But they disturbed him only because Margaret could not help knowing about them.

She knew, but said nothing to divert him from his course, though she knew also that her kin in Alabama were even more hot for secession than the rampant men of Texas. Pale, anxious, she bore herself stoutly, smilingly, watching over Sam as far as she could, and on her knees asking God to care for him.

When it was seen that Sam could not be moved, the Texas legislature took the matter of sending delegates in their own hands. Sam refused them credentials. They went anyway, with a certificate from the legislature that they nevertheless represented its will and the will of the people of Texas.

Then came Sumter! The first gun; and, with the rest of the South, Texas was committed to the rebel cause. Together with the state troops, Texas officials were called upon to take the oath of loyalty to the Confederate government. For the governor and cabinet, this ceremony took place in a small committee room. Sam, pale and grim, was at the head of the long table, his eyes seeming more deeply set under

the hairy cliff-like brows than ever and more piercing, an expression of profound sadness on his face. He had come to them after a sleepless night, hours spent on his knees beside Margaret asking God to show him the light if perchance he had been blind.

With a grave nod, he took his seat, then the clerk of the Senate read the oath of loyalty. There was a pause before he began to call the names. One after another, Sam's advisers rose and gave assent—men who could not resist the mounting tide of patriotic frenzy that was sweeping Texas toward the abyss. All but the governor had risen.

Then, as some of his cabinet pleaded for the last time with moist eyes, while others dared not face his stern look, the clerk called hoarsely:

"Governor Sam Houston!"

He said nothing, only stared out over the heads of these men who had been his dearest friends, his mouth set in a grim line.

"Governor Sam Houston!" the clerk called a second time.

Silence, then again for the last time:

"Governor Sam Houston!"

Silence. At last a stir, then men rising to pass out, one only stopping to lay a hand affectionately on Sam's shoulder. To that one, he half whispered, "I cannot betray my convictions, and my God, who has said, 'Thou shalt not shed thy brother's blood!' "

Chapter XIV

THE next step Sam took immediately. To the legislature he said:

"It is now in order for me to resign; I have never failed to bow to the will of the majority. When I shall have passed out of this room for the last time, a mere citizen of Texas, my first thought will be, 'What can I do to help my fellow citizens in the struggle that awaits us?' "

The noble simplicity of the man thus laying down his power and dedicating himself to service in a cause he believed to be hopeless touched even his old enemies. The chorus of hatred died out, for there could be no mistaking his sincerity, no denial of the anguish it cost him. More clearly in his renunciation than in any act of his as soldier, diplomat, and administrator was shown the purity of the patriotic flame that had consumed in him all personal ambition.

He sent his son Sam, now nineteen, off to join a Confederate regiment with a grip of his big hand and the words, "Be a good soldier, my boy!" Then stood with Margaret, holding her close and comforting her in her grief. "We have the little ones left, Peg, and we will pray God that our first-born may be spared."

Nearing seventy, Sam remembered his last sight of Jackson, who had died sixteen years before. Fiery Andy had been mellow, had lost his bitterness, had talked of God; he had made a good exit. Sam prayed, "May I be permitted to do likewise!"

The terriffic strain of the last months of his public life had told upon him severely; he grew lamer, and the old wound in his shoulder bothered him constantly. But he was more serene than ever, and gentler in word and deed. His home, Margaret, the children, and the plantation absorbed him. News of remote battles he would not read.

He had weathered the storms of Texas political strife better than most. Poor Rusk, for instance, who had killed himself in '57, a victim of melancholy. And Anson Jones, who had done the same thing in the following year because of the state's ingratitude. And Grayson and Collingsworth, who had taken their own lives in '38 during the heat of the bitter fight for the Presidency. Sick and disillusioned, these men had given up. Well, his own tide had now begun to run swiftly to the sea, but he went in peace and softly, his spirit borne up by love and the hope of the young lives growing up around him.

One day a messenger rode to Sam's house, coming from the Inn at Huntsville to say that a man named Golliday was lying ill there and had asked for Sam Houston. "He says you used to know his father, years before he was born, back yonder in Tennessee."

"Golliday?" Sam puzzled for a moment over the odd name, then dipped down into his faithful memory to bring up the picture of a lanky, brown-haired, friendly citizen of Lebanon, the man who had rented him the tiny office where he first nailed up the sign, "Sam Houston, Atty.," for a dollar a month "and pay me when you get the dollar, my boy!"—the man who had loaned him money to buy law books, candles, and writing paper. "It's Isaac Golliday's son," he said, limping in to Margaret. "Have a bed made ready, Peg; I'm going to fetch him here."

Weak as he was with fever, young Golliday protested, "I must not allow you to trouble yourself, Sir!"

"Nonsense, my boy," and Sam directed two slaves to carry him out to the waiting carriage, then sent one to summon his own doctor, who found the patient in Sam's neat cool guest chamber between sheets that Margaret herself had smoothed. The physician was grave, saying:

"It's a severe case of fever. He must have a bath and cold compresses at once."

"He shall have everything he needs that we can give," Sam promised, and sent a slave for hot water. When the doctor had gone, Sam himself stripped and bathed the thin, fevered body, kneeling to wash the feet and saying gently in answer to the man's plea that he be given to the care of servants: "My boy, your father was my friend! And the Master I serve

did not disdain a like service. I should be false to His teaching if I could not do this for the son of one I loved."

There was no hypocrisy in it. With the help of the God she had unfalteringly worshipped, Margaret had brought Sam truly into the fold. A new heart and a new spirit had been born in him. His enemies might sneer, as they did, when it was told that he had washed young Golliday's feet, "It's the final blasphemy, setting himself up as another Christ!" But their sneers troubled him no more than a breath of prairie wind; he continued to care for his sick guest, and when he was better sat with him for long hours talking of the past, asking questions about the Lebanon of the present, discussing the war and the recruiting detail on which the young man had been sent. Of his own son he said, "Sam has suffered one slight wound, but is recovered."

Only once more did he emerge from his retirement, stung by the taunts of certain men who accused him of secretly opposing the Confederate cause. Limping with difficulty upon the platform, he stood for almost a minute without speaking, looking slowly around upon friends and detractors, then saying deliberately:

"I am old; the days are upon me when all thoughts of ambition and of worldly pride give place to the earnestness of age. Ere I step forth on the final stage of the long pilgrimage to death, I would say that all

my thoughts and all my hopes are with my country. To Texas I have given my blood and my heart. If there be any man here who now dares to say that I could betray Texas, and the great, though I fear mistaken, cause which my first-born is serving, let him step forth!"

He ended, and a great burst of cheering followed. There had been men who said, "If the old fool appears and attempts to justify his course in opposing secession, he will never leave the meeting alive!" But even though he had again reiterated his conviction that Texas had made a wrong decision yet, as he made his way slowly along the lane that opened for him after he came down from the platform, hands reached out to clasp his and husky voices cried, "God bless you, Sam; we know you've always been honest!"

For the last time, the old lion had turned upon the jackals and routed them.

The war dragged on into the third year. Sam was growing feeble. Partially paralyzed, he sat in his big chair, following Margaret as she moved about her household duties with bright, deep-set eyes—eyes that had looked out on life keenly, with a slightly mocking cast, but always with passionate interest, and were now looking as directly and bravely into the face of death as they had ever looked upon the perils and pitfalls of the world. Margaret's heart was wrung by the sight of the great body she loved falling into immobility, but was comforted as always by

the strength of his spirit. Near the end he talked much with her of the future she must face:

"My dear, I'm sorry I cannot leave you better provided for. I'm poor, though it has been said," and he smiled grimly, "I have lined my pockets at the expense of Texas. Lies! However, it doesn't matter now what they say." His eyes shifted to the window through which came the sound of young voices. "At least, Peg, I'm leaving you a houseful of children. Don't let the older ones bully the little ones; that was one failing my mother had. The war will end, though I won't be here, and you and the children will face hard times. But stick to Texas, my dear. It's a land of growth and promise."

At times, Margaret heard him talking to himself, and her heart winced with fear lest he had fallen into senility. Jackson's name he muttered, and John Jolly's—his Indian father had passed away even before Old Hickory—and the name of his lost love, Eusabia; and Margaret understood and yearned over him. She was his wife, the mother of his children. No woman could have had more from him; none could stand in her place. They had been happy together. Together, they had knelt at the throne of God.

The last day came, and an afternoon of mellow sunshine, with the sounds of children playing, farm wagons passing out of town over bumpy roads, dogs barking and hens clucking in the back yard. "Margaret!" he called.

She came to his chair, drew his head against her breast, "Yes, darling?"

He had a smile for her, then: "Don't let Burleson tell a lot of pleasant-sounding lies about me at my funeral. I've just thought," and he chuckled, "that I'd like to have carved on my tombstone, 'He made a stagger toward God and the Truth,' but I reckon it wouldn't do. Some of the old devils I used to drink with would laugh at that word stagger! . . .

"Now, now, Peg, don't cry. I'm going very soon, my dear. I'll need a smile from you, and a kiss, and your old 'Good luck and God bless you, Sam!' Ah, my dear."

He sank into a coma, her hand in his.

He passed in the night, and on the morrow Texas heard that her "Big Father" was dead.

THE END

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